

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE.

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CONTENTS.

1. THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. By Prof. Seeley. III. . . .	<i>Macmillan's Magazine,</i> . . .	387
2. FERNYHURST COURT. By the Author of "Stone Edge." Part IV.,	<i>Good Words,</i>	397
3. STRANGERS IN THE HOUSE,	<i>Blackwood's Magazine,</i> . . .	408
4. THE GOOD LA FONTAINE,	<i>Saint Pauls,</i>	419
5. THE DOWAGER COUNTESS,	<i>Saint Pauls,</i>	429
6. POPPING THE QUESTION ON THE STAGE, . . .	<i>Saturday Review,</i>	440
7. "OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT" AND COUNT BISMARCK,	<i>Saturday Review,</i>	443
8. THE GERMAN VIEW OF ALSACE AND LORRAINE, . . .	<i>Saturday Review,</i>	445

POETRY.

RED LEAVES AND DEAD LEAVES,	386	ON THE MOORS,	386
THE FALL OF THE YEAR,	386	MY LOVE,	386
THE EXILE,	386	THE FALLING LEAVES,	396

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RED LEAVES AND DEAD LEAVES.

By shaded sinuous pathways once our mood
 Chased us all day, till each was found of each,
 And hands and eyes met eyes and hands in
 speech,
 While no word spoken named our hap for good;
 But on, still on, we wooed the deepening wood
 To show the inmost rose-bower we would
 reach,
 To rest and learn somewhat, and somewhat
 teach;
 And red leaves smote our faces where we stood.

For we stood, surely knowing the bower was
 found,
 And trod the threshold; and when some sud-
 den dart,
 With thunder above and earthquake in the
 ground,
 Cleft in between, and startled us apart,
 Never to meet save in this roseless land,
 Where dead leaves smite our faces as we stand.

Tinsley's Magazine.

THE FALL OF THE YEAR.

Now flowers of deeper hue and scarlet glow;
 Or in rich purple the white bosom lies;
 And leopard-spots of blossom's golden eyes
 On hill-sides green and sky-domed commons
 show;
 And the blue Heaven over her doth throw
 Her thinnest web of fair and lawny haze;
 And suns retire from proud accustomed ways,
 At nearer tides of Night's great overflow;
 And green-flushed Earth in dreamy Autumn
 light
 A gilded change to many colours sees
 Through all her shrubby lanes and branch-
 ing-trees,
 Nor thinks the King whose banners hang so
 bright,
 Will break her leafy sceptre, and affright
 With stormy snows her vales and upland
 leas.

All the Year Round.

THE EXILE.

FROM THE PERSIAN OF KERNANI.

In Farsistan the violet spreads
 Its leaves to the rival sky;
 I ask how far is the Tigris flood
 And the vine that grows thereby?

Except the amber morning wind
 Not one salutes me here;
 There is no lover in all Bagdad
 To offer the exile cheer.

I know that thou, O amber morning wind
 O'er Kernan's meadow blowest,
 And thou, heart-warming nightingale!
 My father's orchard knowest.

The merchant hath stuffs of price
 And gems from the sea-washed strand,
 And princes offer me grace,
 To stay in the Syrian land.

But what is gold for, but for gifts?
 And dark without love is the day;
 And all that I see in Bagdad
 Is the Tigris to float me away.

Public Opinion.

ON THE MOORS.

Red lie the moors, the glorious autumn moors,
 Crimson, and red, and scarlet, with the glow
 Oftwice ten thousand nodding heather-bells;
 With wealth of colour, gorgeous as the tints
 Of Iris' purple robe: What time the bee,
 Gauze-winged and eager-eyed, and amorous,
 Drunk with the nectar of his paradise,
 Hums o'er the honeyed blooms, his song of love.

The grouse-cock whirs, exultant, from the whins,
 Proud covey-sultan, spreading his brown wings,
 Nor boding coming doom; the red deer bears
 Grandly aloft his many-antlered head,
 And o'er the rippling burns, and o'er the fells,
 As yet untrod by the sportsman's foot,
 Falls soft the mellowing silver of the night.

On the hill-side, the white flocks rest and browse,
 Nor heed the shepherd's tyke: sweet Even
 comes
 With folded hands, with soft, full, limpid eyes,
 Grey-robed and placid from the golden West,
 And from her starry lap, drops asphodela
 On eyes of tired mortals: silence reigns,
 And all around is beauty — all is peace!

MY LOVE.

"MARK her slender form bend low
 As the Zephyrs lightly blow;
 Mark her robe, like blossoms rare,
 Scatter fragrance on the air;
 See her face as soft moon beaming,
 From her smiles ambrosia streaming,
 And on brows more white than snow
 See the raven tresses glow!
 Lotus-like, her dewy feet
 Treasures yield of nectared sweet;
 Light as on her footsteps pass,
 Blushes all the bending grass;
 And rings of jewels, beauty's powers,
 Freshen into living flowers,
 While brighter tints and rosier hues
 All the smiling earth diffuse."
 Broughton's Popular Poetry of the Hindoos.

From Macmillan's Magazine.
THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION OF THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY.

BY PROFESSOR SEELEY.

III.

I HAVE endeavoured to describe the power which is at work in all the changes of our time, the power of organized public opinion. I have also described to you the changes themselves, and have represented them as being mainly of one kind; namely, abolitions of monopoly. Now, there are many who complain of the partiality shown by the ruling power of the time for this kind of work, maintaining that much more necessary tasks are neglected for it. At any rate, it is evident that some very necessary tasks remain undone, and that public opinion at least does not show any great forwardness to undertake them. Pauperism is as great an evil perhaps as Church ascendancy, but it is not dealt with so promptly. National education has waited forty years, and about twenty years ago the Ministry of Lord John Russell expressly declared that a system of national education was rendered impossible by the opposition of religious bodies: this was equivalent to a declaration that public opinion was not sufficiently pronounced or resolute for such a scheme; in other words, that it was not so zealous in this matter as in matters of another kind. It appears, then, that public opinion chooses among abuses, that it is not animated with an equal hostility to all. There must be something either in the peculiar nature of this power or in the conditions under which it works, or in both, to give it this particular bias. Why is it that, instead of an outcry against abuses and evils that afflict the State, we have had simply a cry of "Down with monopolies"?

There are, I believe, some general reasons arising out of the very nature of public opinion which help to explain this; but perhaps the main cause is to be found in a special influence which is at work. I will consider the general reasons first. What was the sovereign power in England to which public opinion succeeded? The influence of a certain number of great families. The new monarch was installed with

great expectations, and actually accomplished some reforms. But it is not to be supposed that he was in every respect superior to his predecessor, or that his predecessor was altogether incompetent: even those who welcomed him most warmly, and expected most from him, probably considered him only better on the whole, and may have been prepared to acknowledge him inferior in some respects. It was not, therefore, to be expected that the new *régime* would shine in every kind of reform. If enlightenment was wanted, the new power was not clearly more enlightened than the old. The Lonsdales and Fitzwilliams of the old *régime* had at least education and leisure, which a large proportion of the new voters entirely wanted. If genius was wanted, the old power knew better than the new how to find it, and had the wisdom to allow genius a good deal of scope. Moreover, under the old *régime* governments were more stable and steadfast than they have been since, and therefore the change removed one almost indispensable condition of all difficult reforms, the feeling of strength and security on the part of the Ministers that preside over them. Now, the highest works of statesmanship require these three things—great power in the Minister, genius to counsel and support him, enlightenment in Parliament to weigh and decide upon his plans; and to none of these things was the new *régime* favourable. Where, then, was its superiority? Its superiority was not a general one, but confined to a special point. It was not a class *régime*. Any other fault it might have as much or more than the *régime* it superseded, but it had not so much exclusiveness. It speedily threw open Parliament to a multitude of interests which had scarcely been represented there before, and in that far mightier parliament which is the true deliberative organ of this *régime*—in the Press—all interests were represented from the beginning, and every voice was free to make itself heard. A *régime*, therefore, which had one special virtue would be likely to distinguish itself by a special class of reforms. When the spirit of exclusiveness was expelled from the Government, it was to be expected that

the monopolies would fall which that exclusiveness had sustained.

Again, some evils in the State are flagrant and conspicuous, and others, though they may chance to be greater, are of a more subtle character. With these more subtle evils public opinion is not remarkably well qualified to deal. It has not the blindness which was sometimes created in the old *régime* by its class prejudices. The accomplished Windham was a steady opponent of popular education, not because he did not know the value of education, but because he felt the *régime* with which he was identified to stand in need of popular ignorance. Men much inferior to Windham in these days escape such a warp of the mind; the removal of exclusiveness has been to this extent equivalent to an increase of enlightenment. But the other kind of blindness which is not produced by special circumstances, the common blindness which arises from want of cultivation, has not been removed by the change of *régime*, and public opinion is more uncultivated, at the same time that it is more equitable, than the class opinion it supplanted. There was no reason, then, to expect that public opinion would be particularly keen to detect abuses that were not obvious. Its reign was likely to be characterized rather by a rough fairness and honesty than by deep wisdom. In this very matter of education that I have just mentioned it would not be capable of condemning a whole class to ignorance on considerations drawn from the reason of State; but, on the other hand, its conception of the value of education would not be very distinct, nor its notion of what constitutes a good education very accurate. It would therefore not oppose education, but it would be quite likely to trifle with it, to misunderstand it, and to mismanage it. In discussions about education it would be apt, from want of thoughts and feelings about the subject itself, to slide off into side issues; and when the question is of turning young savages into citizens and Christians, when the question is of the very souls and characters of the young, it would be quite capable of getting on its hobby of tests, quite capable of hunting a monopoly through

the very schoolroom where its children are learning to read and to tell the truth. It would be likely enough to intrude the maxims of the shop and of the racecourse into the school; one would not be surprised if it proved unable to conceive a university except in one of two ways—either as a fund to be divided in fellowships among a number of people, according to certain rules, or as a system of violent and dangerous competitive struggles, carried on partly in the schools and senate-house, partly on the Thames and at Lords' Cricket Grounds. To deal with subjects like this, in fact, to deal with the whole department of culture, it is evident that you must have a Government of the wisest, and no one has ever supposed that the government of public opinion, at least such as we see it in this age, answered that description.

Again, there are some great political works which may be evidently needed, and may ever be acknowledged to be indispensable, but which are of extreme difficulty, which require a vast collection of facts and a patient application of contrivance and discretion to a multitude of details. Now for such works the *régime* of public opinion has one great advantage over the old *régime*. The old *régime*, it may be said, had no ideal of statesmanship. Conservatism being universal, no one contemplated such a thing as constructive legislation. If the constitution was a thing settled and complete, so that the only question was of interpreting it rightly, a statesman could scarcely be called upon to create or contrive upon a large scale. Only some great catastrophe which had reduced part of the constitution to ruins could furnish such an occasion, as the Irish Rebellion of '98 made the Legislative Union possible. The appearance of a vast reforming party, and the familiarity with large changes which their exertions have gradually produced among us, have enlarged our conception of what statesmanship may do, and have led us to conceive of such a thing as an art of progress, have made us change our conception of a state as an unchanging thing, which has only to be watched and protected from the impact of foreign bodies for a conception of it as a growing

and developing thing, a thing perpetually shifting, advancing, and putting forth new organs, and requiring therefore to be studied with method, to be helped and directed in its changes with boldness and expertness, and capable of being indefinitely developed and improved by genius. But though the present *régime* has given us the idea of this higher statesmanship, it has at the same time placed enormous difficulties in the way of the idea being realized. The actual result has been that the statesmen of the present age have not appeared great in proportion to the greatness of the changes they have introduced. This is not perhaps a necessary effect of the dominion of public opinion, but rather a consequence of the particular way in which its dominion was established. Had public opinion made its way by gradual advances, and gained for itself from politicians, first respect, and then in course of time deference, it might have become great itself without too much eclipsing the greatness of statesmen. But it gained its sovereignty by wrestling with and defeating the first public men of the day, and therefore its victory was won at the expense of the prestige of statesmanship. The influence which should naturally support the statesman, and receive direction from him, dictated to him. The popular movement, while it humiliated by defeat the statesman who opposed it, was greater and more commanding than any of the statesmen who joined it. Hence the part of the statesman for a time lost some of its dignity. There were statesmen who had administrative skill, character, and the tact of government; there were others who had the sympathy and confidence of the people, and who understood the signs of the times. But there was an unfortunate want of statesmen who combined both sorts of qualification. Those who understood the time best had been so long in opposition that they had not acquired the art of administration. They were better agitators than rulers; they could represent the popular movement better than they could direct it. Meanwhile the other side had a leader with the experience and all the qualifications of a statesman, but he passed his life in a

perpetual unsuccessful warfare with the spirit of the age. The Whigs only shone when they were in opposition, and Sir Robert Peel when he gave up one of his principles. The consequence was that the *régime* was not simply that of public opinion, but of public opinion ill-directed and reduced to feel its own way. If this want of able leaders were an evil incident especially to the *régime* of public opinion, if public opinion is likely always to have the best statesmanship of the age resisting it, and to be served only by the second best, it must certainly be considered an unfortunate form of government. Perhaps, however, we may consider that this is already disproved by later experience. In any case it is possible to point out the special and exceptional circumstances which damaged the statesmanship of the Whigs of the Reform Bill, while it is not surprising that Sir Robert Peel, a veteran servant of the old *régime*, should have been out of sympathy with the new from the influence of his training, and not at all from any natural repulsion of high statesmanship from the sovereignty of public opinion.

What is important for us, however, is to remark that the present period for the most part has not been favourable to the higher statesmanship. The dislocation of parties at one time, and their even balance at another, has kept statesmen perpetually occupied in maintaining their positions, and has thus disabled them from undertaking great public works. *Anxietate careus animus* — a mind free from the sense of insecurity — is as necessary for great works of statesmanship as for great works of poetry. Such security being out of the reach of the statesmen of this age, they have necessarily leaned on their oars and drifted very much before the tide of popular feeling. Whatever the people wanted, if it was not too difficult to accomplish, they could have; but difficult tasks, men felt, it was not the season to undertake. The measures of this age are, therefore, to be considered not merely as what public opinion was capable of demanding and supporting, but what without much help from skilled statesmanship it felt safe in carrying through.

This reflection will explain much inaction and many omissions. The question of pauperism, for example, belongs to a class of questions with which the present age has hitherto felt itself altogether inadequate to deal. It is an enemy which a minister must grapple with alone, if he is to have a chance of overcoming it: no ministry is a match for it and a strong opposition together.

To say that this has been an age of feeble ministers is equivalent to saying that public opinion has hitherto been much divided. The nation, after it began to rule, for a long time showed no decided preference. The two vast parties that formed themselves were evenly balanced, and therefore no minister could gain decided support in a decided and consistent course. In these circumstances we had an age of reforms, but of easy reforms. It was necessary to look about for the few principles about which there was agreement, or at least which were sure of a majority, and to apply these principles to the very utmost. Nothing, therefore, was more natural than the prominence given to the question of monopolies. Fair play was what everybody could understand; "an open field and no favour," was a cry which would always be popular, and so it was kept up till a number of simple changes had been accomplished, which, when the total result of them is reckoned up, amount to a remarkable revolution. But if greater works are to be accomplished, less obvious principles must first be agreed upon, and they must be grasped so firmly and with such unanimity that a statesman may feel secure in rearing upon them an elaborate structure.

Such are the general causes which seem to have given this turn to the movement of the age. The reflection suggested by the consideration of them is a commonplace one. It is that the public, to be a good ruler, wants much more enlightenment. That it may treat great questions in a worthy spirit, and that it may give room and support to great statesmen, it must have much more enlightenment. Enlightenment in the highest and largest sense is what is wanted; but there is a lower and more special kind of enlightenment that would go some way. In the last lecture I spoke of the organization that has sprung up in the country for the purpose of furnishing the people with information on political subjects, and also with the opportunity of discussing them. It is by these means that that average vote is determined upon the wisdom of

which depends the welfare of the country. Now, in this machinery there is a strange defect. One very obvious way of enlightening the people on political subjects there is, which nevertheless is not taken. Newspapers, leading articles—we know the skill with which our *Times* leader puts us in a condition to meditate over the breakfast table on the most important question, whatever it may be, of the day. We are supplied with all the necessary facts, which, carefully separated from the unnecessary ones, are arranged before us in lucid order; then follow all the most necessary scraps of learning, legal or other, that may assist in the decision of the question; then follow a few reflections, written in the most intelligible English and with the most skilful adaptation to the wants of the average understanding. Every day of his life the lawyer ponders there for some half-hour before he plunges into his briefs, the schoolmaster before he turns to his heap of exercises, the man of business before he opens his letters. This is our political education. The machinery is admirable as far as it goes. That half-hour a day ought, you say, to make us all in time accomplished politicians. Yes, and so it would if a certain preparation had gone before it. But without that preparation it never can; without that preparation I believe that little more will be acquired at the end of twenty years than at the end of one. Do you think you could learn Latin, or German, or geometry, in a year, or in ten or twenty years, by studying for half an hour every day? That half-hour a day might be most valuable on one condition, but otherwise it would be almost valueless. The condition is that you should first have concentrated your attention for some considerable time upon that subject to the exclusion of others. You will get on with your German, even if you have no more than half an hour a day to give to it, if at the outset you devote a month to it. But all knowledge stands at the top of some hill, or at least hillock, and wants at the outset at least one strain, one continued effort. There is always, as it were, a ledge to be reached before you can pause; if you pause before reaching that, you slip back to the place you started from. This is what most people do who read their *Times* newspaper. They have never taken the first long step, and so, day after day, they struggle with politics for half an hour, and at the end of it slip back helplessly to their starting-point. How could this be remedied? It is not

everyone that can make leisure to think over political subjects for himself, and to acquire the most necessary knowledge about them. But it might be taught in schools and colleges. A plain man would think that nothing was more necessary for a boy to learn than that knowledge which might enable him, when grown up, to discharge his duty to the State. Since our schoolmasters have decided otherwise, probably most people think there is some profound reason why, nevertheless, it should not be done. I have no time here to say more on the matter than this, that I have been a schoolmaster all my life, and know as well as another what can be taught, and what cannot, and that I believe that, with a little contrivance and a few good text-books that might easily be written, politics could be taught.

Ah! but the party feeling that would be aroused!

It is strange how inexorable we are in enslaving our schoolmasters. The Englishman who wished to express his contempt for the slavish institutions of the Continent said to a foreigner, "There are but two subjects worthy of the attention of a human being, politics and religion, and on neither of the two dare you speak." Just so much reticence, and no more, we are all eager to impose on our schoolmasters.

I said that, besides general causes, there was a special influence that had forced the politics of the age into a crusade against monopolies. I was thinking of the reaction of Irish politics upon English. The insular position of England, the security which she has always enjoyed from the more serious commotions of the Continent, and her material prosperity, would make her history, since the Constitution became settled, a somewhat dull story but for her connection with Ireland. English grievances for the most part have not been so extreme but that they could be endured, and it seems likely that they would have been endured, but for their close connection with Irish grievances, which were of the same kind, and which were not to be endured. In the last century there were two reasons why the Irish influence should be less operative. For the greater part of that century the Irish population lay motionless under the yoke that had been pressed down upon them; the people were crushed beyond the power of complaint; and when they did at last rouse themselves, it was with such hostility and menace that England was driven to assume an attitude of stubborn

opposition, and, while she closed her ears resolutely against the grievances of Ireland, was not likely to be struck with the resemblance of those grievances to her own. But when the rebellion of '98 had been put down and the Legislative Union accomplished, there began a period when Ireland pleaded her cause by the legitimate methods of argument and agitation, and at the same time when Irish questions were discussed fully and with Irish eloquence in the English Parliament. Since that time Irish and English discontent have been in a manner fused together, and the natural effect has been to give to the English discontent a far more bitter flavour. The case for reform is immensely strengthened when its advocates are entitled to treat of England and Ireland together, and to heighten the modest abuses of the one country by the enormous wrongs and miseries of the other. In Ireland reformers have found in fact the only lever which would have been potent enough to lift the dead weight of English conservatism. It is an instructive lesson of the way in which moderate abuses should be attacked. There is, indeed, no way of dealing with moderate abuses except to force them into alliance with gross and flagrant ones. By themselves they are safe, because there is no sufficient reason for removing them; but when grosser abuses of the same kind are swept away, they go too, because there is no sufficient reason for sparing them. It is also an instructive example of the great results which may flow from uniting different nationalities under one government, when that government is under the sway of opinion, and is not a mere blind military force. England and Ireland cannot, it appears, be closely and vitally united in a *régime* of opinion without suffering profound modifications. No more can England and India. And does not the remark suggest to us, at the same time, speculations upon the future of Austria married to Hungary, and of Russia married to Poland?

Ireland presented most of the abuses of England on an enlarged scale. But this was especially true of the abuse of monopoly. The most exaggerated pictures that could be drawn by the most virulent Radical of the condition of England would have been literally true, or have fallen short of the truth, if applied to Ireland. He might, by a high-flown metaphor, have compared England to a conquered country. Ireland was a conquered country without any metaphor at

all. He might have compared the land-holding aristocracy of England to the Normans of the twelfth century trampling on the newly conquered Saxons. There would have been wild exaggeration in the comparison. But the conquest of Ireland was in fact not much more than a century old, and the ascendancy of the conquerors had been secured by every pitiless method that legislation could devise. Let us consider in order the leading monopolies that were complained of in England. There was the monopoly of legislation held by the landholders and the Protestants. But nomination boroughs were more numerous in proportion in Ireland than in England, and the exclusion of Catholics meant in Ireland the exclusion of the great majority of the nation, and not, as in England, of an insignificant sect. The representative system, therefore, if it was unsatisfactory to many in England, seemed in Ireland a simple mockery to most. Commercial restriction hampered industry in England; but the industry of Ireland had been almost destroyed by it, and the Corn Laws, which in England meant dearness of provisions, might come to mean famine in Ireland. The monopoly of the Church in education placed a certain number of the rising generation in England at a disadvantage; but in Ireland it excluded the great majority both from good primary education and from the higher education. The right of the Church to tax the people excited murmurs here; there it created civil war. Here the wealth of the Church provoked some opposition; there it was regarded as an intolerable and enormous abuse. Lastly, that great monopoly which the age does not attack but steadfastly maintains, but which none the less helps to increase the mass of discontent and to hasten change—the right of private property itself, the right of one man to be rich while others are poor, or, as it will always appear in practice, the right of a few people to possess a greater share of the national wealth than the many—was in Ireland tenfold more invidious than in England, because in Ireland it had been brought about by a conquest and a confiscation, the memory of which was still recent, and because the landholders were not, as in England, the patrons and friends of their tenants, but for the most part absentees.

Thus the union of England and Ireland was not merely the union of a prosperous country with a very miserable one. Ireland might have been full of abuses and yet not have helped forward the cause of re-

form in England. She did so because the evils under which she laboured reflected with exaggeration the evils of England. The anarchy and disturbances of Ireland constantly forced the attention of the Legislature: other questions might be put by; but for Ireland it was always felt something must be done. And yet it was impossible to do anything without establishing precedents for similar changes in England; for all the principal evils of Ireland existed here too, though in a less extreme form. And these evils being all reducible to the monopoly established by the conquering English, pitilessly excluding the Catholic Kelt from all the benefits of his native land, the cure of Ireland, which all statesmen and all parties in turn were obliged to take in hand, could not but consist in the abolition of monopolies, and then, by a kind of reflection, the same character was impressed on the political movement of England. Hence it is characteristic of the present age that the principal changes introduced in England have been borrowed from changes previously made in Ireland, and that the advocates of change in England have generally been able to quote in support of their proposals what I may call the Irish *præjudicium*.

Before showing this in detail, let me point out that the weapon by which changes have been wrought in England, was first tried and proved in Ireland. I have described the new art of agitation which belongs to the present age, and I have contrasted the present systematic and powerful action of public opinion with the wildness of its behaviour in the eighteenth century. But I intentionally passed over one great interference of public opinion, which belongs to the last century, but of which Ireland, not England, was the scene. The long and painful regeneration of Ireland, now in progress, begins with the threatening intervention of the Volunteers in 1779. England, in her depression after her American disasters, was obliged to confess her inability to send troops to Belfast when an invasion was threatened by a French and Spanish fleet. The Irish party saw their opportunity. Volunteers appeared to defend the country, but put in an irresistible claim to be paid in political power. The old notion belonging to an earlier state of society, of a connection between political franchise and military service, reappeared for a moment. The convention of Dungannon, at once an army and a parliament, reminds one of the *comitia centuriata* of Rome. But it anticipated a régime at the same time that it revived the

past, for there first appeared the organized public opinion that was destined in no long time to be sovereign in both countries. And as it was in Ireland that this power first appeared, so in Ireland it first attained supremacy. For Ireland was the scene of the Catholic Association. This was to be expected. When public opinion is ready to take organization, it will do so first there where the need is most pressing. Leagues and political meetings will be most rife, where the representative system is most inadequate. Ireland was before England in devising the machinery of agitation, just as much as she was behind England in parliamentary representation. The corruption and subserviency of the Irish Parliament provoked the Volunteers, and the absence of any safety-valve to carry off the feelings of the Catholic population caused the Catholic Association. While the Catholic Association changed the character of the government in both countries by enthroning public opinion, it accomplished at the same time a definite alteration in English institutions. When Protestant ascendancy fell in Ireland, it fell in England too, as a matter of course. According to the principle I laid down, the greater grievance carried with it the smaller one. That sect which had least to hope in England, because it at the same time had little power, and excited most unreasonable alarms, obtained through the fusion of English and Irish politics its emancipation. One of the strongest and most inveterate feelings of the country, its exclusive Protestantism, received by that change a shock which no statesman would have ventured to give it except under the pressure of necessity, and the necessity came from Ireland.

The next great change in English institutions was the reform of the representation. This may seem at first sight a purely English measure, because, though the abuses it removed had existed on a still greater scale in Ireland, yet they had been much diminished thirty years before, at the time of the Union; and the agitation which carried the Reform Bill did certainly not, as in the case of Catholic Emancipation, spread from Ireland to England. The influence of Ireland is in this case of a different kind, yet if we examine we shall find it no less operative. We shall discover the Irish *præjudicium* that I have spoken of; we meet with that argument which is characteristic of the whole period — It has been done in Ireland, why not in England? Read the speech with which Lord John Russell introduced the Reform Bill in 1831. You may observe the nervousness with which

he announces the act of disfranchisement which formed a principal part of it. "I am perfectly aware that in making this proposition we are proposing a bold and decisive measure. I am perfectly aware, and I should myself vote upon that persuasion, that on all ordinary occasions rights of this kind ought to be respected, and it would be no small interest, no trifling consideration, which would justify the invasion of them." How does he go on? "I well recollect, however, the language in which a right honourable gentleman opposite (Sir R. Peel), standing there as a Minister of the Crown, proposed the measure known by the name of Catholic Emancipation, accompanied by another measure for the disfranchisement of 200,000 freeholders — unoffending men, who had broken no law, who had violated no right, who had exercised their privilege, perhaps ignorantly, certainly independently and impatiently, in a manner which they in their consciences believed to be best." And then he goes on to recite the arguments by which Sir R. Peel had defended that act of disfranchisement, that extraordinary evils required extraordinary remedies, that "the franchise was no doubt a vested right, but it was also a public trust given for public purposes, to be touched no doubt with great caution and reluctance, but still which we are competent to touch if the public interest manifestly demands the sacrifice." These sentiments, Lord John Russell adds, the House adopted, and "he never knew any measure carried through the House with greater support than that measure of disfranchisement."

Here is the Irish *præjudicium*, and see with what confidence it inspires the speaker. "But, sir," he goes on, "shall we say that we are bound to have one principle when the peasantry of Ireland are concerned, and another when the rich and the noble are interested, and that we must consider the latter as sacred, and not venture to touch their privileges when the public interest requires it? Shall we say that the freeholders of Ireland, merely exercising a right which the Constitution gives, may be deprived of that right, and that we must not venture to touch the privilege of the noble lord who returns two representatives to this House for Gotton, though the Constitution says such a privilege ought not to exist? Are we to make this glaring distinction between the rich and the poor, between the peer and the peasant? Are we to disfranchise the forty-shilling freeholder, and must not

we touch the borough which is claimed as the property of some noble lord?"

The Act of 1829 therefore was pregnant with more consequences than first appeared. O'Connell, with his Catholic Association, not only inaugurated a new dominion, not only broke open the gates of Parliament, and gave the first precedent of enfranchisement; they created at the same time the first precedent of disfranchisement. Where the Irish Catholics had entered, the English middle-class and the manufacturing interest followed, and at the same time by the door through which the Irish freeholders had been dismissed were expelled the English rotten boroughs.

In '67 the franchise given in '32 was still further enlarged. Here, too, the precedent had been given by Ireland in the "Act to Amend the Representation of the People," passed in '50, when an eight-pound household franchise was substituted, among other changes, for one of ten pounds.

In free trade the influence of Ireland was not less visible than in parliamentary reform. Commercial restriction, like every other grievance, had been felt much more severely in Ireland than in England. English commerce and manufactures had repeatedly called in the Legislature to crush the competition of Ireland. This, therefore, was the first evil with which the Irish, when their spirit revived in the last century, set themselves to grapple. The agitation of the Volunteers was a free-trade agitation; the end of it was the same, and the means partly the same, as the end and the means of the Anti-Corn Law League. But the resemblance is rather curious than really important. The Irish movement in this case was too remote in point of time, and too different in all its circumstances from the English one, to produce any effect upon it. The leaguers certainly gained no confidence from the success of their Irish precursors, and did not, as far as I know, refer to it. But the weight of Ireland was thrown into the scale of free trade in a much more conspicuous and decisive way. Ireland decided the question by the force of that superior poverty which makes economical evils, which to us are only serious, fatal to her. Dearth here proved famine there. At the critical moment when free-trade principles were beginning to have the advantage, happened the potato blight in Ireland. It converted first the Whig opposition, and then Sir Robert Peel. Lord John Russell sent to his constituents in the City a letter, in which he announced his adhesion

to the principles of the League. Sir Robert Peel resigned, and then took office again, expressly to repeal the Corn Laws. In the Queen's Speech of '46 the failure of the potato crop was alleged as the reason for recommending the repeal, and, in the speech in which Sir Robert Peel avowed his change of opinion, he rested his case principally upon this occurrence.

Church ascendancy extends over two departments — over education and over religion. And in education there have been two monopolies — the monopoly of the Established Church, and also the monopoly of all the religious bodies taken together. Of these monopolies, one has always tended to destroy the other. The Dissenters have been eager to secularize education in order at the same time to wrest it out of the hands of the Church. What I may call the monopoly of religion in education is sacrificed because the monopoly of the Church is involved with it. This movement has gone on in England, where religious differences are comparatively slight, and do not for the most part extend to fundamental points, either of theology or morals. It has gone on amongst sects which have been in the habit of recognizing the existence of a common Christianity, and which have habitually and sincerely spoken of the Church as a Christian body. Meanwhile, in Ireland the Established Church has been opposed to the most intolerant of all Christian denominations — to Catholics recognizing no Christianity out of their own communion. A religious difference thus deep, and capable of no compromise, was made ten times deeper and more irreconcilable by the fact that the excluded sect had been excluded by naked conquest. It had antiquity on its side, if you take the Tory scheme of government; it had the will of the people on its side, if you are a Liberal. Here was indeed a very pretty quarrel. Aggravated by every conceivable circumstance, it was the masterpiece of Erinnyes. A drop had been mixed in Irish politics which was the concentrated essence of discord. In the department of education, even more than in other departments, therefore, we might expect the Irish movement to anticipate the English. Accordingly we find that the point we have reached in 1870 was reached in Ireland in 1831 or rather, I should say, a point beyond it. Not only unsectarian, but secular education was then forced on by the irreconcilable religious difference that divided the nation, and the State was already able to take upon itself a work that many years

later it was obliged to abandon as premature in England. As usual, in the controversy that now rages, our politicians have the Irish *præjudicium* to guide them.

In the expulsion of the Church monopoly from the higher education, it cannot be said that Ireland has taken the lead. But the Queen's Colleges, if not the earliest, are at least among the earliest examples of purely unsectarian seats of learning.

The more direct attack upon the ascendancy of the Church has been in both countries aimed principally at two points—at the right of the Church to tax the community and at its connection with the State. In both points the assault was infinitely hotter in Ireland than in England. The tithes in its old form was destroyed for both countries by the armed resistance of the Irish peasantry, and the church cess fell in Ireland before the church-rate controversy was compromised in England. The connection of the Church with the State was a moderate grievance to the English Dissenter, compared with what it was to the Irish Catholic. It was to Ireland that the controversy owed all its bitterness, and in Ireland the controversy is now over, while in England it still continues. But of this in a moment.

The warfare of the present age against monopolies, I have said already, seems to near its end. Not only does little of this kind now remain to be done, but there are perhaps signs of the beginning of a new age, by which I mean a change in the forces that determine the political movement. The age, we have seen reason to think, has been what it has been partly because the position of statesmanship had been depressed by the victories of agitation. One class of statesmen, we saw, had been too much the humble servants of public opinion, and another class had wasted much energy in fruitless attempts to resist it. Meanwhile public opinion had been put in possession of supreme power before it was educated to use it. Wanting leaders and wanting enlightenment, it had been obliged to throw itself into a course of easy reforms. Both these evils have now been much mitigated. Far more skill is now devoted to forming and educating public opinion, and statesmen have taken courage to assume once more their natural position of leaders. We begin to speak of the approach of an age of constructive policy: that is, an age when the difficult reforms will be possible, when the highest statesmanship will be able to count upon support in attempting the highest tasks. We ought not, therefore, to assume that the current

will hold much longer the same direction. But if it should do this, it is evident that the recent course of Irish politics indicates the future course of politics at home. In the last two years new precedents have been made in Ireland which will, as a matter of course, be used, like the earlier ones, as levers to unsettle whatever remains still firm in the fabric of English monopoly. A tenant's right has been recognized which not many years ago Lord Palmerston pronounced to be equivalent to a landlord's wrong. This has been done, of course, as a purely exceptional measure, and the English landlord, it is true enough, is very different from the Irish landlord. It is well understood that the act is not to be a precedent, and probably there is no danger of its being at all closely imitated. In a certain point of view it runs counter to the tendency of change in England, instead of outstripping it; for it places a restraint upon the circulation of land, instead of settling it free from restrictions. Still it is an interference of the Legislature in behalf of the lower class, and against the landed interest, and as such it is a *præjudicium* like the others I have enumerated. For the same grievance exists in England; here, too, there is a large class that murmur that the people have no share in the land—that the land has become a monopoly. If this cry should gather strength, it will certainly be in vain that the promoters of the Irish Land Bill have called their law exceptional and a concession to necessity. It will be drawn into precedent in spite of them; it will assuredly not be forgotten, if the English lower class should determine to be like the French lower class and to get possession of the soil, that the Legislature have already, to gratify a popular wish, abridged the rights of landholders in Ireland.

But there is another great pending question upon which it is still more evident that the Irish *præjudicium* is there. The disestablishment of the Irish Church settled a controversy there which rages here, too, and removed an ascendancy which, though infinitely more invidious there, is yet here too felt as invidious by a large class. The great grievance is gone, and now the moderate one stands by itself, and with the millstone of a precedent round its neck. On this point there can be no difference between the friends and the enemies of Church establishment. Those who dislike State churches on principle, and who point to the examples in past history of the warping and cramping of the Christian spirit in churches that have identified

themselves with Government, will triumph; those who think the State Church the higher ideal, and that examples taken from States more or less despotic are inapplicable to countries in which the government is thoroughly and heartily popular will grieve; but neither party will deny that the Irish *præjudicium* hangs over the head of the connection of Church and State in England. I think, too, that I am not overstepping the forbidden line, and passing out of history into politics, when I add, that nothing can possibly save the State Church in England except such a reform as shall deprive it of the character of a monopoly. Monopolies may be good things or bad, or they may be sometimes one and sometimes the other, but they cannot live in this age; the time is angry with them, and the axe is at the root of all that are too conspicuous to be overlooked.

A State Church that excludes or repels into some inferior place those who, to all

plain judgment, are equal in merit, in piety, and learning to those whom it promotes or favours, has the character of a monopoly. It is invidious, and that is what at the present day institutions that are national are not allowed to be. That is the one thing that the *régime* of public opinion sets its face against. A State Church that could remove from itself the brand of invidiousness would have nothing to fear. It might disregard the Irish *præjudicium*; but, so long as it is a monopoly, why should it escape? No other monopoly escapes. The boroughmongers have fallen, the Protectionists have fallen, Protestant ascendancy is at an end; and if the oldest and most universal of all ascendancies, that of the male sex, is threatened, why should the Church establishment be safe? *κἀὲ καὶ Πάτροκλος*. If the Universities are taken from the Church because they must be national, it is difficult to see by what right she can hope to hold the Cathedrals.

A DISCOVERY, which portent seekers may regard as significant, if they please, has been made concerning the architecture of the basilica of St. Peter — the "pride of Rome." The wonderful edifice has been found to be out of symmetry. For generations men have looked upon the stately dome with all sorts of eyes; architects have planned and artists have painted it; and no one till this year has suspected that there was a hitch in the structure. Lately, however, a French tourist — a venerable *abbé*, holding an official position — with a keen eye discovered that there was a want of uniformity between the dome and the axis of the building; not a questionable want of architectural harmony, but an absolute malformation or defect of building. A close examination showed the line cutting the centre of the dome to be a metre and a half to the left of the central line passing through the western entrance door; in other words, that the dome is about five feet out of position. The announcement of this discovery aroused surprise in some breasts and indignation in others. One architect, Martinucci, was for preventing the publication of the fact; others were for officially recognizing it. A learned father, Secchi, declared that a general unsymmetry was known to exist (!); that the chapel of Saint Sacrament was a metre out of place; that the arcades near the tribune differed one from the other, and that this latest addition to the known deformities was not worth cognizance. Evidently the Romans are a little annoyed at the disclosure, and they handle the *abbé* rather roughly. The latter affirms that Pius the Ninth, upon ascending the Pontifical throne, declared that if ever he be-

came rich he would reconstruct the façade of the building, which exhibits many imperfections. A disputant on the Roman side denies this affirmation. Whom shall we believe? So far as the possible fulfilment of the alleged promise is concerned it does not much matter.

Gentleman's Magazine.

FALLING LEAVES.

FALLING, the autumn leaflets,
Yellow, and withered, and sere;
While autumn winds are singing
The dirge of the waning year.

Falling, the solemn leaflets,
Out of my Book of Life —
The days of spring and summer,
With pleasure once so rife.

Fallen, from life's tree, the leaflets,
Many and many a friend;
Fallen, and leaving me waiting
To meet, like them, my end.

Falling — friends, life, pleasures:
It were an awful thing
Were the leaf-fall not an earnest
Of another brighter spring;

Where all shall be re-created
By the touch of a magic hand;
And share, in glad reunion,
Life in the summer-land.

Tinsley's Magazine.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HONOURABLE A.

THE procession moved in rather solemnly to dinner. Alicia's gown was exceedingly smart, indeed, if anything, a little too much so for the occasion; but it may be doubted whether any amount of fine gowns is considered by the patients as a sufficient compensation for the bore of waiting for them. Dinner, however, passed off pretty well: the conversation was general, the young ones laughed, Mr. Dimsdale and the rector were eager as usual in their many interests, and what she had seen and done abroad served for Alicia to dilate on to the company.

"That's Marie Antoinette, of course," said she at last, rather consequentially, as she looked up during a general pause at a Vandyke of some ancient Dimsdale which hung opposite to her. "Oh! I thought because of the dress, you know," she insisted when it was explained to her.

"Henrietta Maria, you meant," suggested some one to help her out.

"No," answered she authoritatively, "the dress is that of Marie Antoinette."

"You saw those magnificent Vandykes at Genoa? I think they're the finest in Europe," said Mr. Drayton, who sat next Alicia; he was a little deaf, but followed, as he thought, the direction of her eyes.

"Yes, I dare say; but I was sick of pictures, we saw such heaps," replied she.

At dessert the small Hugh appeared. He listened with open ears to Alicia's somewhat florid description of her father's horses, apropos to the bad posting which she had endured in Italy. All which, being the son of a master of hounds, greatly interested his small mind, as he sat quietly on his uncle Charlie's knee, whom he looked upon as the chief of men, and watched the making of a face upon an orange, eyes, nose, and mouth cut out on the inner peel, "and a pip in his mouth, Uncle Charlie," he advised anxiously.

As soon as the ladies, however, were gone, the *enfant terrible* began in a loud whisper, —

"Were those horses which that lady —"

"The Honourable A 1," said Charlie.

"Now don't be mischievous," hinted the more prudent Tom.

"The Honourable A 1," said Hugh, delighted with the savour of wrong-doing, though he did not in the least know in what it consisted. "Were those horses the same which Uncle Tom said were such screws that they weren't fit for a hackney coach?"

"Now run away, Hugh; you've got your orange, and it's quite time you should be in bed," said Tom, half amused, but a good deal afraid of vexing his brother.

Captain Dimsdale looked a little annoyed, turned away, and began to talk to his father and Mr. Drayton, who, however, went off in rather a depressed state of mind soon after dinner was over.

"Her very voice is enough!" muttered the fastidious old man to himself, as the hall-door closed behind him; "it's an obstinate voice and an uncultivated voice!"

In the drawing-room, when the gentlemen entered, they found Mrs. Dimsdale hardly out of her siesta, and her daughter-in-law sitting beside her, recounting the grandeurs of her past and her intentions for the future.

"Thank you, we cannot stay beyond the end of the week. I want to get back to London for the next Drawing-room. I thought of asking Cecilia Seymour to present me, but I find my mother has already arranged with the Dowager Duchess of Dinmont, and therefore you know . . . I assure you my mother and I created quite a sensation at the last Drawing-room."

(Which was perfectly true: Lady Cannondale, who was big and red, had appeared in a *parure* of peacocks' feathers, which had delighted the whole court, from the Queen downwards, and been taken by the ignorant public for the Lady Mayoress, who happened to be a very lady-like little woman.) "It is usual to be presented again, you know, upon one's marriage. One goes up a long line of ladies —"

"Are you explaining a Drawing-room to me, my dear?" said the stately old lady somewhat sternly, looking curiously at her as she leant forward without moving a muscle of her countenance.

"My dear Alicia, what are you talking about?" interposed her husband; "my mother was going to Drawing-rooms and court balls long before you were born."

"Oh, indeed! I thought as you didn't go to London, you know," said she, a little taken aback and silenced for a moment; but she recovered herself, and began on May with renewed dignity. "My dear May," she said patronizingly, "I shall have great pleasure in introducing you to some of the best society when next you come up to London. I suppose you go to Cecilia's house sometimes."

"Thank you," said May, a good deal surprised; "I very seldom leave home, and when I do my sister takes me out with her. I'm much obliged to you, however, for thinking of it," she exerted herself to

add; and then she called up Charlie to the rescue, and launched him on the balls at Naples, where the fleet had fortunately happened to dance at the same time as Alicia.

She next undertook the Squire, who came up at the moment with his kindly courtesy to sit by her, and she began on politics, as best suited to his capacity.

"A Liberal!—the Corn Laws—ah, yes, some people may do as they please; but of course, *we* are Conservatives; the aristocracy must, you know, feel strongly on such points, and hang together in defence of their privileges."

At night Captain Dimsdale came into his wife's room as soon as she had dismissed her maid.

"I wish, Alicia, you would try and be a little more careful. You have a perfect talent for always saying the wrong thing. What did you mean by explaining Drawing-rooms to my mother, and proposing to introduce my sister into 'good society'? They're used to much better society than you are."

"I'm sure I was exceedingly kind and considerate to them all to-day," said she with dignity.

"And then all that stupid cackle about your father's position, and 'dignity,' and 'horses,' as if nobody'd ever had four horses before." (Hastings was a little sore when he remembered why they did not now exist at Fernyhurst.) "The very baby was quizzing you. Why, those brutes are a laughing-stock in the county, as Tom must have told them."

"I hate Tom!" said she.

"And to my dear old father, too, of all people, with his modest ways, who never prided himself on anything in all his life. 'My family must be Conservative!'—if you do want to be proud, why don't you go in for their having raised themselves from the ranks? 'The aristocracy hang together;' 'my father's important position!'—intolerable bosh!" said Captain Dimsdale, walking up and down as he worked himself into a passion.

"And so ours is a fine position; and *we* are a noble family, which you ain't," replied his wife, not understanding him in the least.

"Good heavens, Alicia! do you mean to say that you don't know that your grandfather's peerage is twelve years old, and that he was a tailor's son?"

"I don't believe a word of it," she answered angrily.

"And that the Dimsdales came in with the Conquest?"

"And I'm sure I don't care when they got in," she replied.

Captain Dimsdale felt his own bathos, he was strong in the attack, but if once he came to recounting his own glories, it was all up with him, and he fell to her level.

"I declare you'll make me as bad as yourself," he muttered as he lounged out of the room again with less than his usual indolent insouciance. He had found that a silly woman was not so easy to manage as he intended, even by so exceedingly sensible a man. There is no convincing a fool. No impression can be made upon her, she returns like water again to the same point; and there is no misreckoning like that of the man who marries one with the hope of having his own way.

The next morning Mrs. Hastings was more silent, but also more sulky, which was hardly an improvement upon the naive condescension of the evening before. She sat in state in the drawing-room with a large piece of carpet work, hideous with flowers impossible in drawing, and rawest and gaudiest in colour, which bore signs of having been very long on hand. She had evidently expected the family to be in attendance, and was rather cross with May, her only companion. Tom and Charlie had started off, however, almost before breakfast was over.

"I may have the dog-cart and the grey mare, papa? I want to drive Tom over to the Blunts?" Charlie's cosmopolitan sympathies had friends all over the country whom the rest of the family knew nothing about.

"Yes," said his father, with his grave smile, "if Tom doesn't value his neck more than I'm doing the chances for the mare's knees."

"Charlie's driving is rather like the driving of Jehu," May explained to Alicia.

"No, May, not quite, because Jehu drove very well," interposed Tom.

May found the morning long. Hastings had disappeared, her father had gone to his business, her sister-in-law was difficult to amuse or interest. Later, however, a number of visitors came in, which assisted matters a good deal. Alicia liked all manner of movement, so that when Mr. Drayton looked in to see if he could give any more help, he found her the centre of quite a large party, and her rather loud, inharmonious voice pouring forth a staccato passage, as it were, of I's and me's.

"I don't think I've heard so many in the Fernyhurst drawing-room in all this thirty years put together," said the Rector to himself as he paid his *devoirs* to the bride,

and then came up to where Mrs. Dimsdale was sitting in rather gloomy though mute contemplation of the cross-stitch which had just been paraded for her admiration.

"A yard of Brussels carpeting would be so much better-looking!" groaned the old lady aside. There was a very keen sense of beauty and art at Fernyhurst.

"I can't think why ladies' work should always be so ugly," said Mr. Drayton innocently. "When one sees what unlimited time and patience will produce in the East, too. That's quite a work of art now," he went on, peering with his short-sighted eyes at an Indian shawl which May had just brought up for her mother. "I wonder why English ladies shouldn't do as well as the Ryots!"

"You must have some knowledge of form and colour," said Mrs. Dimsdale, smiling.

"And why they can't draw their own patterns, as I always tell Sophia; I should have thought that the best part of the concern," he went on.

"It's not so easy. I'm always trying and failing," added May.

"But then the failures of an artist and an educated woman have character and an idea in them, whereas things out of a shop are by their nature of a shop shoppy," observed Mr. Drayton.

"I always get my patterns at the best shops," Alicia was saying complacently to the company at large as she took up her work again after it had made its round, too fully convinced of the admiration it must excite to require any expression of it, and too busy as usual in attending to her own voice to hear anything else that was going on. "They are very expensive," she went on patronizingly to the curate's wife, "but I hate all home-made fad-fads, you know."

Things were going on tolerably easily, but presently a lady came in, whose parties in London Alicia knew that her mother had vainly attempted to compass, and she put herself into the forefront of the battle for attention, as if the visit had been intended chiefly for her. Lady St. Maur, however, after the necessary civilities, turned away almost immediately to her old friends, discussed the merits of every bath in Germany fit for Mrs. Dimsdale's ailments, and pressed May to come over to them without attending much to Alicia. "You promised before we went to Wiesbaden, and here am I obliged to hunt you up again, May. Drive over to luncheon, if you can't be spared at night. The man who knows most about Spanish

art in all England is coming to us, and I want you to meet him, my dear," said she, kindly, as she left the room.

"I am very glad that you know that sort of people," said the Honourable A., a little crossly.

"I'm afraid, dear, that Hastings did not give at all a good report of us. I hope you find we are not so savage as you expected in these woods," answered May, laughing.

But Alicia became solemn; she resented a joke as a sort of personal affront.

Every evening Fernyhurst had a dinner of all its neighbours, and the bride came down in a finer gown each night, which evidently comforted her, and was paid proper attention to, and took possession as it were of the situation, the house, and the company. But, altogether, the time wore slowly away to all. She had no interest except in herself, her grandeur, and the fine people whom she knew, and having intended kindly to patronize the Dimsdales, her slow perceptions found it difficult to take up any other idea.

She had taken an absurd dislike to Hugh, who returned it in kind, and his baby thrusts went home sometimes in a way which tried the self-command of the family. At last the happy day of release arrived, and the old Squire put her into the carriage with a sigh of relief. His chivalry had been sorely tried, but he preserved it to the end intact.

"I can't say I much like your family, Hastings," said his wife, ungraciously, as they drove away—"except your father, and he's a dear old man. What a wonderful fancy he has taken for me, to be sure! I'm a prime favourite of his, evidently!"

Hastings looked out silently from the carriage window and whistled, not by any means from "want of thought."

As the servants retired after the hall door was shut, and the Squire vanished into his own room, Charlie seized Tom round the waist, and careered in a mad gallop round the billiard table, with loud cries, "Alfin respiro." "Really, Mr. Dimsdale," said he, stopping at the drawing-room door, and spreading out imaginary petticoats, as he tripped gracefully across the room with a delicate mince ("I can make a much better young lady than *you*, May. See how I manage my crinoline!" said he, aside), "Really, my dear sir, my father's horses are so much finer than other people's, being as he is a peer, and his hogs, dogs, cocks, and geese are so very superior, that I must beg leave to differ with you about the Corn Laws!"

"I can do it much better than that, Charlie!" cried Tom, sitting down in an armchair, in an elegant attitude, fanning himself with his pocket-handkerchief.

"My mother was saying to the 'Duchess-Countess' one day, 'The heat of the weather really makes me very warm;' and Lord Bugaboo, who happened to be present at the time, observed —"

"Now, don't be bad boys," said May, coming up behind him, and putting her two arms round his neck, and her fingers on his mouth. "Leave her alone, we must make the best of her, for Hastings' sake; and don't let's talk to papa or mamma about her, it will only vex them."

"Well, least said soonest mended," said Charlie, "I dare say; but it strikes me there isn't much to tell the governor. I caught a shrewd glance out of his eye sometimes, though he is much too chivalrous to say what he thinks."

And, in spite of her efforts at wisdom, May could not help feeling grateful for the hearty laugh which had taken the sting out of the trials to her taste and feelings during the last few days.

It was very true, though the Squire never mentioned the subject, he had formed a very distinct opinion on the matter; but, "silent as we grow when feeling most," he did not utter it — only once May heard him mutter sadly to himself, even in the interest of digging a new well for a cottage, "you may pay too dear — you may pay too dear — for getting what you want."

In fact, poor Hastings had made but a bad bargain with Mammon. His father-in-law had not much besides his wife's fortune, and wanted all his money for himself. He made his daughter but a small allowance, and the Dimsdales lived on in a little house in London constantly complaining of their poverty. They were at liberty to go and stay with the Cannondales if they pleased, but against this all the good as well as the evil in Hastings rebelled. He could not stand his mother-in-law with her airs and aristocratic pretensions. He had been brought up in a well-ordered household, where the show was less than the reality. His mother was not a particularly interesting woman, but she was a thorough lady, and would as soon have thought of boasting of her carriages and horses as of not going barefoot, of her fine house as of not having a brick-floor. She had always been used to such things, and existence did not present itself to her mind as possible in any other form, any more, indeed, than without air or water.

With the Squire it was different; he was too simple-minded — too high-minded — for it to be a virtue in him. It never even occurred to him that there was material for a vaunt in possessions or position; they were accidentals, not him. Even his estate he always regarded as something that had come from his father, and was to go to his son; in the entailed, not the personal, light. His perfect simplicity gave him the appearance of very high breeding, though it sprang from a different cause. He was unconscious of self; he cared nothing for opinion; he had always been an acknowledged chief wherever he had lived; and, as Madame de Stäel said of the Italians, "Il ne faisait rien parcequ'on le regardait, et il ne s'abstenait de rien parcequ'on regardait." This gave a sort of ease to his manner which, with his exceeding courtesy, had a great charm.

This perfect independence is an important quality in the class to which he belonged. The upper class on the Continent are seeking after place, or court position and favour, or they have retired from all political and social action, like the legitimists in France and the best educated men in America; but the landed proprietors in England, each the centre of his own little kingdom of action, form an element in English public life whose value is very great. What can Government offer them? — they want nothing. What could a court give them? — they would think it intolerable to serve any one, even their sovereign, except in public life.

The colonel of a regiment, the captain of a man-of-war, a great manufacturer, may have more despotic sway over the men under them, but it is only for a time, and over the family life of their subjects they have generally little or no control, while with the many hundred men, women, and children, more or less dependent upon the chief of even a moderate estate, the Squire's influence is felt in every detail of their material prosperity, in the comfort of the cottages, the gardens, the allotments, the relief in sickness, the sanitary measures, and, to a great extent, the moral training towards self-reliance and habits of exertion. The bad cottages and abominable nuisances so often complained of, belong in general to small owners of two or three houses, who depend for a living upon charging as highly, and giving as little as they possibly can.

The amount of unpaid work, often anxious and tedious, performed by country gentlemen in the management of magistrates' and county business, police, roads,

&c., in the supervision of poor-law boards, the prisons, hospitals, lunatic asylums, and reformatories conscientiously looked after, the conduct of which can certainly bear a comparison with that of the same institutions in towns, gives them a local field circumscribed in extent, but very real in its sphere of usefulness. Even granting that there is some bad political economy and some "indifferent justice" to be found among them, stipendiary magistrates do not turn out always wise, statesmen have sometimes to undo the work of their predecessors, the master manufacturers are not supposed to be altogether successful with their men.

As a class the country gentleman has had the best education at school and college which the country has to give. He has generally travelled a good deal, and been able to compare both men and countries from without with his own, which rightfully understood is a sort of education in itself; while that which constitutes the best training of all, the management of men, politically and socially, has been peculiarly his.

Whence come the treasures which furnish the walls of loan exhibitions and South Kensington portrait galleries but from our country houses, collected by generations of country gentlemen? The best libraries, the most beautiful collections of plants and shrubs, the curious antiquities so liberally shown, are theirs. From their ranks have sprung the leaders who have fought our battles by land and sea for hundreds of years—such as Sidney, Raleigh, Marlborough, Wellesley, Clive, Howe, Anson, and the Napiers. And when the public has required other service, Pym, Hampden, and Sir John Eliot came from their class; while in later times, and for different needs, what were Pitt and Fox, Lord Derby and Lord Palmerston, but country gentlemen born and bred? They will no longer have the same monopoly of the conduct of the state. Other classes have come rightfully "to the fore," and have both the education and the energy to use their right, but the honour of England has not suffered in the hands of what Mr. Gladstone calls "the leisure class;" theirs has been both a dignified and a useful life.

CHAPTER XIII.

TALK UNDER THE PLANE-TREE.

THAT autumn there were a number of cousins staying as usual at Fernyhurst.
LIVING AGE. VOL. XIX. 860

Clara had arrived from Brickwall, the small Lucy had been sent up for change of air from the Dockyard by her anxious mother, overdone and troubled, as usual, and always on the move from one station to another, with a large family of boys to look after, and little rest for the soles of her feet.

Serope and Tom had just returned from a walking tour in Switzerland during the long vacation. Tom had been reading for a fellowship, following his friend's example though without his success, while Serope was passing through that unsatisfactory period of waiting for work, except what he made for himself, which most young lawyers must undergo—the weary waiting for what often fails even in the end for many clever men.

"How can you sit in-doors this lovely day?" said Tom, looking in at the drawing-room window one hot afternoon: "come out directly, womankind, and here is Serope longing, I know, to spout poetry to you. He (not I) smuggled all these wicked Galignani editions" (it was before the days of Tauchnitz) "through the Custom House, so he'd better read and enjoy his crimes. What will you have? Listen,—Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Southey."

There was a splendid old cedar near the house, making a whole tent of green shade, and under it the girls encamped, the flickering light and shadow playing over their bright muslins, bright faces, and glistening hair. May began to draw, Clara to crotchet, while the child Lucy wandered off in company with Jumbo, Tom's Scotch terrier. To May's great surprise Walter chose Shelley, and read one poem after another with much suppressed fervour. One is often astonished at a taste or a sentiment in a man altogether out of keeping with the rest of his character. You find afterwards that it is a bit of the atmosphere he has lived in, of the common stock of thought, as it were, in his set or family; the opinion belongs to him, not as an individual, but as one of a class. Few men have the originality of mind to resist this, probably it is not even desirable. They are all the richer for having shared in the wave of thought and feeling which has passed over their world. "On peut être plus fin qu'un autre, mais pas plus fin que tous les autres," is true in a different sense from the proverb. A curious passion for Shelley was at that time rife in one at least of the universities—a deputation had even been sent by Cambridge to Oxford of three in a post chaise

to expound the seer and proclaim the oracle.

But this piece of historical information had not reached May, and she therefore wondered as she said, "How beautiful!" in chorus with Clara, who, without much appreciation of the poetry any way, was quite ready to admire everything on trust in such good company.

Even Tom, who was lying on his back with his straw hat over his eyes, biting a grass, and whose instincts certainly did not incline that way, muttered, "How musical!"

"Exquisite!" said May at last, a little doubtfully, "but it's very morbid."

"What's morbid?"

"That the world is so dark," replied she, "and injustice and misery are the rule."

"I wonder if you lived in Whitechapel," cried Walter almost angrily, "whether your views of life would be so optimistic. Those who are born on the sunny side of the wall think all talk of injustice morbid."

"Decides," said she, "art ought to raise one into a higher ideal life. I'd as lief read a police report as some of Shelley. You may be terrible, but you must not be disgusting. I want to be lifted out of the dusty road or the foggy marsh into the eternal light. Poetry should raise one into the ideal."

"That's not what I want it for," retorted Walter, "but to help me to see the ideal in this life, the general in the particular. The painter shows me the human beauty in what I take for a dirty little boy. The poet shows me the human soul inside."

"Well, then, read Shakespeare; he is healthier and truer too."

"Are you recommending Scrope the study of 'le divin Williams!' as we heard a Frenchman call him the other day?" said Tom. "I believe you could dodge him through the thirty-six plays, and I doubt whether you could even say their names."

"Would you like Tennyson better?" said Clara, picking May's pocket. "Look here, she's just got his new volume, I declare."

"I hate his Eleanores and Lilians; they ain't real women, they're clouds. The ideal is very different from the unreal," declared Walter.

"There are you two skylarking again, as usual," cried Tom. "I tell you what, if either of you use the word 'morbid,' or 'art,' or 'ideal' again, I'll read Peter Bell straight through. I've got it here, so you'd better take care."

"Here's something of Tennyson's you ought to like," said May, holding out a poem to Walter. "In Memoriam" had only just come out.

"Perplex in faith, but not in deeds,
At last he beats his music out."

"Give it, me; I've not seen that yet," replied he.

He was so long in reading it that May looked up surprised.

"Don't you know," observed Tom sententiously, "that Scrope never does two things at a time? When he thinks, he can't talk; and *vice versa*. That's why the unfortunates who fancy they know what he means by what he says are so often out. 'Speech was given to conceal thought,' says the wise man."

"How good it is to have an affectionate friend to give one a character!" answered Walter, smiling.

"Oh, paradox-monger, isn't what I say the literal truth? What you think and feel is so precious that you never give it to us outside barbarians."

"Well, if you let off your steam in words, it won't turn your engine."

"Hear, hear," cried Tom; "didn't I tell you so?"

"Isn't there some place where one man does the talking and another the governing? For rarely should a man speak at all, unless it be to say that is to be done, and let him go and do his part in it and say no more about it. There is a very great necessity indeed of getting a little more silent than we are." ("Not for you," muttered Tom, in a low voice.) "As I read the other day, 'we are all going away in wind and tongue.'"

"Lucy, come here directly," interrupted Tom severely, turning to that young lady, who had just returned from the garden with a cabbage leaf full of mulberries and was administering them to the company. She had now ensconced herself close to Walter, and was putting them one by one into his mouth; while he, his head filled with his book, received the attentions with provoking unconsciousness, and eat his fruit resignedly without seeming to know whence it came.

"Lucy, come here," repeated Tom. "I will not have you flirt in that outrageous way with Mr. Scrope. You proposed only yesterday to be my little wife. If you behave in this manner, I shall be off the bargain."

"Oh, no, cousin Tom," said she, fitting back to his side and nestling up to him, "I like you much the best. Mr. Scrope isn't

nice at all to play with. He just opens his mouth and shuts it up again, like Jumbo when I give him biscuit."

"There's a pretty character of you, Scrope! I hope you are pleased. But, Lucy, you are not to be trusted, I'm afraid," he went on gravely. "You're a snare and a delusion. I heard you tell Charlie last week that you liked *him* best. Now what am I to believe?"

The child looked extremely puzzled, almost distressed, but her little face cleared in a few minutes, and her mischievous black eyes shone as she said, —

"Oh, but Charlie was here *then*, you know; now he's gone away, I can't like *him* best."

"Bravo, Lucy — 'Philosophy of the effect of absence on the affections, by a Flirt.'"

"Tom, how can you talk such nonsense to the child?" laughed May. "How you are spoiling her!"

"Nonsense, my dear! Why it's the most luminous sense, compared to all that Scrope and you have been pouring out for the last half hour! Listen, Lucy, isn't this pretty? —

'Only the ass with motion dull,
Upon the pivot of his skull,
Turned round his long left ear!'

he read solemnly.

"Oh, how nice! do read some more," cried she capering round him.

"Ladies and gentlemen, do you know what o'clock it is?" said Walter, rising from the ground and stretching himself. "Ten minutes to dinner, and the Squire the most punctual of men."

He was exceedingly fond of Mr. Dimsdale, and the extreme contrast between them only seemed to make them better friends.

"Privateer rig, I can tell you all," shouted Tom as they rushed up-stairs their different ways at racing speed.

Twice that evening Tom heard Walter repeating to himself what sounded like the remainder of the Tennyson verse, —

"There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds."

"What did Mr. Scrope mean about White-chapel?" said May curiously to her brother. "How does he know anything about it?"

"Oh, he's got some crochet or conundrum of his own down there, I don't quite know what — a ragged school or something. I shall go and look it up, next time I'm in London," replied he rather importantly.

CHAPTER XIV.

A GIRL'S PERPLEXITIES.

A YEAR had passed away, and they were all more than a year older in many ways. Tom's profession had been somewhat uncertain. There was a large living in the family; but for that very reason his father had never urged him to go into the Church. Besides this high-minded feeling, there is certainly that protection against the abuse of private patronage that the donor is generally the first to suffer if it is wrongly given, whereas a minister or a chapter are unlikely to be troubled personally by however great a "job." As Tom's tremendous animal spirits, however, subsided, the restrictions which are demanded of a "young parson" grew less formidable in his eyes, the work more interesting, while the ambition to distinguish himself, and the chances of success further a-field in other professions, seemed to become more shadowy and unsubstantial. There was a curious vein of common sense in the Dimsdales, a want of the romantic and the heroic in all excepting May, which served them exceedingly well in the long run of ordinary life, and prevented their spending strength in the search after any ideals of thought or action beyond their natural reach. This they inherited from their mother. Mr. Dimsdale, in different circumstances and with a different wife, might have been a "passionist" after many things; but the flame came out now but rarely; he had passed it on, as it were, to May.

The family gathering had taken place as usual about Christmas-tide, and it was the little half-hour before dressing for dinner, when often some of the pleasantest talk of the day takes place — no one is in a hurry — the women have not got on their fine clothes or their fine manners; the men are a little tired, and inclined to be quiet, not as in the morning, looking out and saying, "It is a fine day: let us go and kill something," as a Frenchman declares to be our habit. The young ones were sitting in the half-gloom of the gallery. A great old stamped leather screen shut in the group near the fire, making a mellow background with the rich browns and reds of the room. The sense of harmony of colour in the arrangements of a house is an art like music or painting, and quite as rare. It was very marked at Fernyhurst. A great yule log on the open fire blazed fitfully as Charlie fed it with fir cones from time to time, the spurts of flickering light bringing out first one and then another

suddenly; Walter plunged in one arm-chair, Tom in another, May sitting on her low stool by the fire, with her head on her hand, and Amy crouching beside her, as they talked over Tom's future, while Milly had gone off to an old piano which, having been brought out of its retirement in the schoolroom, now stood in a distant corner of the long room. She was touching a few chords from time to time or singing a note here and there, as she tried one piece of music after another in the dusk, with only the light from a small hanging lamp behind her.

"I shall come up on purpose to hear you preach, Tom," said Charlie, "whenever it comes to pass."

"I shall be very sorry for it," answered his brother. "I'd rather do it before the Queen, Lords, and Commons than see you opposite me on such an occasion."

"Do you remember how we used to play at preaching in old days," said May, "and what a hurry we always were in to depose the preacher?—'There, that's enough; now let me!'"

"How one wishes one could do the same by some of those big prozers, and give them a bit of one's mind!" said Charlie. "I often feel inclined to say, 'That's more than enough; now, let me.' And mind, Tom, you're not to begin preaching at us as if we were miserable sinners, and you were suddenly released from all the failings of humanity by reason of a white tie," added he, lifting up his coat tails, as he leant his back against the tall chimney-piece.

"Well there's something else to be done in the matter besides preaching, and better work too; and I mean to do it," replied Tom, sturdily.

"It's a grand profession!" said Amy with enthusiasm.

"Yes,—sometimes," mused Scrope: "when it's a vocation, not 'a profession.'"

"You're rather hard, Mr. Scrope," said May, in an annoyed tone.

No answer came out of the big chair.

"Charlie," cried Milly, from the piano, "if you are going to learn that second for to-night, you'd better come and begin."

He went off quickly to her side; but the sounds which followed were so inharmonious that the peals of laughter which filled up the long intervals between the bars were decidedly more musical.

"Papa," said May taking hold of her father's coat-tail and detaining him affectionately, as Mr. Dimsdale walked across the gallery towards his own room and stopped by the group at the fire for a

moment, "isn't it a pity? Tom says he can't stay after to-morrow, though the examination isn't till next week."

"Can't you really stop, my boy?" observed his father affectionately.

"I can't, indeed, papa, thank you. I'm engaged to dine with the Groves."

"I'm glad my dining days are over," said the Squire musingly. "I can't think how anybody has the courage to dine out. Just think of the risk one runs! One may be tied down with a horrible bore on each side for two hours at a stretch."

"I wonder what you go to that man's for, Tom?" said May. "I heard him put a shy young girl to the question here one day at dinner, asking her how old her mother was, and why her uncle left the army, which he wouldn't have dared to do to an elder who could resist. I don't like him."

"Nonsense," said Tom; "why shouldn't he ask if he wants to know?"

"You oughtn't to gratify your curiosity if it hurts other folk. It's not being a gentleman."

"What does it signify? He's an honest man and a clever one," retorted Walter.

"I think it signifies a good deal," answered May; "don't you, papa?" But Mr. Dimsdale had now vanished.

"There's a great deal too much thought now about being a gentleman. Did you hear that debate in the Union, Tom, two or three years back?"

"Not as I mean it," replied May.

"Are you quite sure you know what you *do* mean, May?" observed Tom.

"Yes, I think I do," she said slowly. "Consideration for other people, caring more for their comfort and pleasure and welfare than for one's own; sacrifice of self."

"That's not fair," growled Walter; "you're coming to the definition of something far higher."

"Well, who did old Dekkar call 'the perfectest gentleman that ever breathed?'" said she.

"Besides, I doubt whether you would really hold to your own definition. I believe you'd find you required the fineries of your class manners, the silver-fork politenesses, over and above."

"No, I think not: fitness is all that is wanted. There are many old people in the village whose manners are perfect; I always feel they are ladies and gentlemen in the truest sense. They are mostly old," she went on musing; "I suppose the hoary head gives dignity, and that is part of my necessary, I dare say."

"May, there's no one sets a higher value on tact and elegance and courtesies, and all that, I'm sure, than you do," remonstrated Tom.

"Ah, that's what I call being a *fine gentleman*!" laughed she; "to be sure I like it, but that's an extra — *ne l'est pas qui veut* — high bred, not only well bred."

"And I don't like it at all. Lord Chesterfield was a beast; he wanted to make clean the outside of the platter, and didn't care whether the inside, &c., &c.," muttered Walter.

"That's not fair, as you said. Lord Chesterfield was the pinchbeck imitation of the reality. He wants you to *seem* to have all the fine sentiments which my gentleman possesses. Mine is the lineal descendant of the old Knights — the ideal Knight that is — the good that there was in chivalry, modified by the time he lives in, and the place he's born in. I dare say he eats with his knife sometimes, and his outside and his clothes are very queer."

"He must have worn a full-bottomed wig when he was Fénélon. Didn't you hear Mr. Drayton telling how the Archbishop one day drove home a peasant's cow which had strayed?" said Amy, looking up.

"And doublet and hose when he was Falkland," followed up Walter.

"And armour when he was Sir Philip Sidney."

"And a ruff and gold chain when he was Sir Thomas More."

"And uncommonly little but blue woad, whatever Tennyson may say, when he was King Arthur," said Walter, laughing.

"Oh, you've gone over to the enemy," put in Tom.

"I'm a lawyer," answered Walter with a smile, "not bound to have convictions. Don't you remember when Brougham was complimented on some speech he'd just made, he said, 'Oh, I could have made a much finer one on the other side?'"

"Uncle Dimsdale's one if ever there were," said Amy.

"And John Deedes, carpenter, another," cried May energetically.

"May," said her mother, opening the door, "come here, I want you. Where can I have put those keys: I can't find my bag and —" The rest was lost as they both disappeared.

Somehow this time May could hardly get a good quarrel out of Walter. Even if there was "a rise," he found some most ingenious lawyer-like way of working round the point, either for himself or for her, which brought them as nearly to one

mind as friends should be. She was a little annoyed and frightened, and kept as much apart from him as she could during this visit of his.

The next evening she was coming home with her cousins from a long walk over the commons to a sick woman in some cottage on the waste. The three girls were crossing the heath, threading the green lines of turfy path among the heather, and singing catches as they went — "Man's life a vapour full of woe," sounded merrily through the frosty air as they walked along, Milly leading with great vigour, when they were hailed by the shooters, Walter, Charlie, and Tom (who had been most virtuously reading, and had only just joined them) on their return from a wild day in the outlying covers.

"We are going to walk home with you; stop," was Tom's peremptory order. He was generally the home representative, and sometimes ordered himself accordingly.

"Appropriately dolorous for your age and disposition, Miss Milly," observed Walter, gravely, as they came up.

"But why mayn't I be sad and dull as well as other people, Mr. Scrope, if I like it?" replied she breaking down in a fit of laughing before she could reach, "woe" again for the third round.

"I hope those guns aren't loaded," asked Amy anxiously.

"All women seem to fancy a gun is a sort of wild beast," said Charlie, "which goes off" ("bites," put in Tom) "of its own accord, without the smallest provocation."

"Well, it's all very fine, but when we've all had our heads blown off it won't comfort us much to hear it," replied Milly with a sage shake of her own pretty little article.

"It is only the first step which costs, Miss Saint Denis," observed Walter.

Their cheerful voices could be heard far away pleasantly in the still evening, and the labourers and an old wood-cutter they met on their road home, turned with a smile to look after them as they answered their evening greetings.

Charlie was not exactly a flirt, but he never could see a petticoat, old or young, without making violent love to it; it was as if he put the concentrated essence of the months which he spent without the society of women into the fortunate half-hours which he passed in their company; and he therefore began as usual, vigorously with both his cousins at once.

At length May dropped behind to have

a little quiet talk with Tom, which she now but seldom obtained. They were lingering at the edge of the old pool where they had so often played together, watching the reflections of the crimson light behind the trees, which lay still and fair on the bright water beneath, when they found Walter had left the others and was waiting for them, and they turned home together, rather silently.

It was still and cold; the youngest of young moons, hardly more than a brilliant thread, with a bright star close at hand, was shining out of "the light of a daffodil sky," which, rich below with the glow of the departed sun, faded into the pale blue ether far up in the zenith.

Tom's home would now cease to be at Fernyhurst, and May felt her brother's departure a good deal; affection depends upon the power of feeling and the depth of the nature loving, much more than upon the qualities of the object, and her love for Tom was far deeper and warmer than his for her.

She hardly spoke as she hung now upon his arm through the darkening wood; the path was too narrow for three, Walter dropped a little behind, and Tom after receiving rather monosyllabic answers from both, began to whistle as he switched in among the bushes, and roused the occasional rustling of a bird, else the crunching of the brown crisp leaves under their feet was the only sound as they walked on under the grove of tall beech-trees, whose stems rose high in the air, and stood out dark against the glowing sky, with a beautiful cathedral-like roof of bare arching boughs over their heads. As they turned up towards the house the old steward came suddenly in sight in the gloaming, and, somewhat to May's dismay, Tom darted after him, calling out to them—

"Go on, I shall be with you directly; I must speak to Robertson about the pointer pups for Hastings."

And May and Walter found themselves alone, which she had successfully avoided until now.

"What a lovely evening!" she began, with a nervous desire to fill up the pause, and as the first thing that came into her head. "But that's a bad omen," and she, pointed to the moon; "don't you remember how when the squire sees the new moon with the old moon in her arm, he says—

"Much I fear, my master dear,
But we shall come to harm?"

"Is it?" answered he a little doggedly. "But I believe in hard work, not omens—a man might win the moon if he worked hard enough and lived long enough. To be sure, mine can't be said to have done much for me yet," he went on, with a short laugh presently. "I'm going off by the first train to-morrow. You couldn't think better of it, May," he said, hardly knowing that he used her name. "I haven't got anything to live on yet; but if you'd a little hope to give me, I feel as if I should be pretty sure to win it, or anything else you set your mind on."

It was an unlucky moment; her head and heart were both full of Tom; she was angry with Walter for what she called his want of sympathy with her brother, and she was vexed at having slipped after all into the pitfall which she had been so carefully avoiding. A dismal feeling came over her that the pleasant intercourse with Walter which they had all enjoyed at Fernyhurst would now probably come to an end; she knew that her father had valued it as giving him fresh views and food for thought from the outer world, into which he now went so rarely; but it could not be helped; there was not the smallest feeling of doubt in her mind as to the matter, she was almost provoked at his pertinacity, "and when I thought I had been almost rude to him all this time, to be safe!" she said to herself ruefully, as she began in a low voice with a half impatient sigh, "I hoped that we had settled all that before so comfortably, and that we were to be friends and nothing more." She hardly even felt shy in her annoyance.

"It isn't so easy to know when one has passed the dividing line," he said grimly. "Do you care for any one else?" he went on as Lionel had done. No man or book ever thinks it possible for a woman to refuse to be married (when there is no objection to the person), unless she has lost her heart to some one else. Yet it happens in real life perpetually, where the home affections are strong, and there is occupation for all faculties of heart and mind.

"For nobody but papa and Tom," she answered quickly; "but this isn't possible,—indeed, indeed, Mr. Scrope, it's quite out of the case; oh, pray put it out of your head," she went on anxiously.

In another moment Tom came suddenly on them breathless round the corner of an outhouse.

"Halloo!" said he, as he saw their discomposed faces even in the faint twilight,

while Walter turned short off in silence. "What, that game's up is it?"

"Oh, Tom, how could you go away and leave me!" cried May, almost crying, as she clung to her brother's arm.

"My dear, how could I know? I'm very sorry. Hadn't the least notion of it. And do you mean you've refused him?"

"Why, of course; for you know," said she, half-crying and half-laughing, "we've always gone on quarrelling all our lives, and hating each other. You've always said so, Tom."

"I know he loved you from the bottom of his heart, May, and for years too. He never talked of it to me, it isn't his way; and so I never let on to him that I knew it, but it was clear enough. And you've refused him!"

"Don't let papa hear you, Tom; here he comes," she said anxiously; "it would vex him sadly. You know he can't bear talking of such things. He doesn't like anybody to marry anybody, you know perfectly; and I like no one half so well as you and him. I'm much happier at home as I am; and then you know I'm to live with you, you used always to say so."

"You know that's all nonsense," said he in a low voice, going moodily back to the house, while May joined her father.

"I don't like that young Scrope coming here again so soon," said Mrs. Dimsdale that night to her husband. "I hope there's nothing between him and May." (Mr. Dimsdale gave a start: it had not come into his head.) "It's quite out of the case; he hasn't anything to live on, and I don't like him; he's as rough as a ploughboy in his manners. I think I shall speak to her."

"Well, it depends more on what she likes, perhaps," answered her father, musing. "I never thought of such a thing, but I don't fancy there's any danger: she likes to talk to him as I do, but she doesn't seem to me to care about him at all in any other way. As to his manners he's rough enough, but I believe he's a rough diamond too; there's plenty of stuff in him under the manners. I think I'd leave the thing alone. Speaking isn't much use either way."

And indeed there was not much need for it; for after that day Walter Scrope's visits to Fernyhurst suddenly ceased.

THE greatest error that any governing man in high position can make, whether he be the head of a Government department, of a merchant's office, or a draper's shop, is the attempt to do too much himself. This is no new remark. It is one that has been made by scores of shrewd bystanders observing the conduct of business; but I think it will be new to remark that this great error nearly always proceeds from moral defects — from vanity, conceit, fussiness, and an overweening regard for one's own peculiar way of doing work. The idea, whether consciously expressed or not, in the man's mind, is this: "I will show them how I can do it," — not "I will teach them how to do it for themselves." There is generally an absence of generosity in such men; they do not love the excellence of other men. And again they are pleased to forget their own mortality, and to omit seeing that the grand thing is to leave behind you those brought up under you who shall be able to do as well as yourself, or even better.

A great administrator, who had ruled over one of the first departments of the State for many years with much credit, was heard to say, "I never do anything myself." And, indeed, it is often quite enough work for any ruling man to see that the work he has to preside over is done, without taking any intrusively active part in it himself.

How a man treats a dead secret is the best test of his powers of secrecy.

The foregoing is a sentence which requires explanation, and may best be explained by taking a particular instance. If a man become acquainted, confidentially, with the details of a bill which a Minister is about to bring into the House of Commons — that is evidently a living secret. Afterwards, after the bill has been brought in, the secret may be considered dead and gone; and yet it may be a proof of want of reticence — indeed, almost of want of honour — in a man to show that the details of a bill had ever been confided to him.

A still more delicate instance of deficiency of secretive power may be shown by the way in which a man reveals the confidence that was reposed in him years ago, the principal persons who were concerned in the secret being dead.

It is very difficult to be clear and explicit in illustrating what I mean; but I feel certain that an observant person, when his attention has once been called to the statement I have made above, will have no difficulty in discerning what is meant by a "dead secret," and how the treatment of it by the man who has been confided in, will almost demonstrate whether he is worthy of having confidence reposed in him for the future.

Arthur Helps.

From Blackwood's Magazine.
STRANGERS IN THE HOUSE.

TIME was when the British Parliament was as close and as jealous as a Freemason's Lodge, and allowed no stranger to report, or even to listen to, its debates; and when it was almost as dangerous to be a "stranger" taking notes in the Houses of Lords and Commons, as to be a "special correspondent" attempting to thrust himself into the French or Prussian armies, to tell the tale of their reverses or their victories. Time is when the presence of strangers, though theoretically prohibited, is practically and even ostentatiously invited. The great inquest of the nation is held with open doors, and what is said and done is made known to the world with a rapidity and an accuracy which have only ceased to be wonderful by becoming familiar. But the right of the people to know not alone what their representatives did, but what they said, was not easily won. The struggle of Parliament against the Press, and of the Press against Parliament, was long and arduous; and though the victory has been finally secured, few know under what force of hostile circumstances the three estates of King, Lords, and Commons were compelled, against their inclination, their prejudice, their sense of dignity and even of security, to admit into a real though unacknowledged partnership, a fourth estate, which, backed by a consenting and sympathizing public opinion, can control them all. The "Stranger in the House" is one of the greatest social and political powers in Great Britain, in America, in France, and in every civilized country of our time. To exclude him once in a way, for reasons assigned, is possible; — to exclude him permanently is beyond the power of Parliament, which is sometimes said to be omnipotent.

Although the invention of printing is in its fifth century of vigorous activity, it was slow to develop itself into that marvellous product of our modern civilization, the daily newspaper. And the daily newspaper itself, mighty as it is in our own day for good, and powerless for real evil, can scarcely be said to have grown to maturity, if it be mature — which is by no means to be positively asserted — until the abolition of the newspaper stamp-duty, and the repeal of the excise duties on paper, — results which were only accomplished in Great Britain within the memory of men who are still young. A much more rapid growth was anticipated for the art of printing by the far-seeing spirits of bygone ages. "When I consider the consequences of this

invention," says Martiville, the astronomer to King Louis XI. in Sir Walter Scott's admirable novel of "Quentin Durward," "I read with as certain augury as by any combination of the heavenly bodies of the most awful and portentous changes. When I reflect with what slow and limited supplies the stream of science hath hitherto descended to us; how difficult to be obtained by those most ardent in search; how certain to be neglected by all who regard their ease; how liable to be diverted or altogether dried up by the invasions of barbarism; — can I look forward without wonder and astonishment to the lot of a succeeding generation, on whom knowledge will descend like the first and second rain, uninterrupted, unabated, and unbounded; fertilizing some grounds, and overflowing others; changing the whole form of social life; establishing and overthrowing religions; erecting and destroying kingdoms?"

These eloquent words contain a prophecy that every passing day helps to fulfil. It was not long before the printing-press operated mighty changes in men's religious belief — (possibly there might never have been a Luther if there had not previously been a Faust and a Gutenberg); not long before it produced a sensible effect upon the social and political life of the civilized world; but it took a considerable time before it presented humanity with such broadsheets as grace our breakfast-tables in the year 1870. In words that have become historical, the unknown author of "Junius" declared, a hundred years ago, "that the liberty of the press was the palladium of all the civil, political, and religious rights of Englishmen." But in the days of Junius — writing under a pseudonym and jealously concealing himself for fear of the law — the liberty of the press was but a partial and restricted liberty compared with its present fulness, and many trammels had to be unloosened, and many fetters had to be broken, before public opinion was free to declare itself on any and all of the great questions, the discussion of which constitutes the political life of a healthy and progressive nation. From the time of Queen Elizabeth, when the printing-press was but a century old, when John Stubbes and William Page had their right hands cut off by sentence of the law for publishing a libel on the Duke of Anjou, and when Elias Thacker and John Copping were hanged in Suffolk for distributing a seditious libel written by one Robert Browne against the Book of Common Prayer, down to the age of George III., a mighty progress had been made.

Men were no longer in danger of life or limb for the expression of their opinions on any subject, unless the dissemination of such opinions amounted to high treason. The Censorship and the Star Chamber had been abolished; and the writers and publishers of political and other opinions were left to say and publish what they thought proper, subject to no preliminary control, and responsible only to the law after publication, if they had wronged or maligned any one, or sapped the foundations of public order. Prior to the time of Junius, the literature of the daily newspapers was not of a high order, and consisted for the most part of summaries of foreign and domestic events, and of letters, rather than of what are now called leading articles. There was but little of literary and dramatic criticism, and small pretension even in the most noted journals to be other than reporters of news. Something higher had been attempted forty or fifty years earlier by Daniel Defoe in his "Review," which he conducted for nine years, and also in the "Tatler" and the "Spectator," journals that not only recorded, though in the slightest manner, the leading political occurrences at home and abroad, but that devoted great learning, eloquence, and talent to the discussion of the minor morals of the time, and to questions connected with literature and the arts. Neither the "Tatler" nor the "Spectator," admirable as they were, and highly prized as they still are by those who, being themselves writers, desire to emulate the graces of an easy yet elegant and classic style such as those journals exhibited, were destined to length of days. The "Tatler" lived but for two years, and the "Spectator" but four, and were succeeded by various others, similar in plan but inferior in spirit and execution, and lacking, many of them, that element of news for which the public appetite was becoming more and more eager. Wilkes in the "North Briton," and in a far higher degree the author of the Letters of Junius, had shortly before and during the year 1769 accustomed the public mind to the vigorous denunciation of obnoxious men and measures, and to a system of angry polemics, in which the free British and American intellect seems especially to delight. But strangely enough the newspapers had not taken to reporting the debates in Parliament. Both Houses were exceedingly jealous of their privileges; and if a stranger, admitted to either House as a special favour, was seen with a notebook or a pencil in his hand, the sergeant-

at-arms very summarily expelled him by his own authority; or if the case seemed unusually flagrant, drew the attention of the nearest member to the fact, in order that Mr. Speaker might take cognizance of the outrage. During the reign of Charles I., the Commonwealth, the Restoration, and up to the reign of George I., there were no professional reporters. Not only were the privileges of Parliament opposed to such publication, but the newspapers were too small to be able to afford space for long speeches. Nevertheless the debates were preserved after a certain fashion, and were from time to time, but generally at long intervals, published in volumes. Many celebrated and some illustrious members of both Houses either wrote out beforehand the speeches which they delivered on great occasions, or wrote them out from memory at a later period, and handed them over for publication in the shape of little books or pamphlets, or to such editors as Cavendish, whose early debates are exceedingly valuable. But there were times when even this course of procedure was offensive to the House. In 1641 Sir Edward Dering was expelled for causing his speeches to be printed. All copies that could be found were ordered to be burned by the hands of the common hangman in Palace-yard, at Cheapside, and in Smithfield. Sir Edward was brought to the bar of the House, where he was ordered to kneel in token of his penitence, and was sentenced to imprisonment in the Tower. He was released after a few days on payment of the fees. In this year the Star Chamber was abolished, and printers began to be somewhat bolder than they had dared to be during the existence of that tribunal. Among other publications referring to the proceedings in Parliament appeared "The Diurnal Occurrences, or Daily Proceedings of both Houses in this great and happy Parliament, from the 3rd of November 1640, to the 3rd of November 1641. London: Printed for William Cooke, and are to be sold at his shop at Furnivall's Inne Gate, in Holbourn. 1641."

In 1642 there appeared "The Heads of all the Proceedings of both Houses of Parliament," "A Perfect Diurnal of the Passages in Parliament," &c. These were weekly reports of the votes and abstracts of the intelligence communicated to Parliament, and were all published "by authority."

In the same year appeared "The passages in Parliament from the 3rd of January to the 10th, more fully and exactly taken than the ordinary one hath been, as

you shall find upon comparing. And although the weeke past doth yield many remarkable passages (as hath bene any weeke before), yet you shall expect no more expression either now or hereafter. London: Printed for Nath. Butter, at St. Austin's Gate, in Paul's Churchyard, at the signe of the Pyde Bull. 1641."

In the year 1662, a question arose in the Irish Parliament concerning the publication of its debates in an English newspaper, called the "Intelligencer," and the Irish speaker wrote to Sir Edward Nicholas the English Secretary of State, "to prevent such publication in those diurnals."

In the time of Charles II. dry summaries of the debates appeared in the "London Gazette." All other publication of Parliamentary proceedings was prohibited. In 1694 complaint was made to the House of Commons that one Dyer, a publisher of news-letters, had ventured to print the proceedings of the House, which thereupon ordered him to be summoned by the sergeant-at-arms to attend at the bar. He was induced to acknowledge his offence, and ordered to kneel down and receive the reprimand of the Speaker "for his great presumption." The House next proceeded to vote "that no news-letter writers do, in their letters or other papers that they dispense, presume to intermeddle with the debates or any other proceedings of the House." The unfortunate Dyer was afterwards horsewhipped in a coffee-room by Lord Mohun, for the sole offence of having mentioned his name in his paper.*

In February 1720, the Commons again solemnly resolved, as a warning to the printers of magazines and weekly periodicals, and not to newspapers, which devoted very little attention to Parliamentary affairs, "that it is an indignity and breach of the privileges of this House for any person to presume to give in written or printed papers any account or minutes of the debates or other proceedings of this House, or any committee thereof; and that upon any discovery of the authors or printers thereof, the House will proceed against the offenders with the utmost severity." But it was impossible to prevent such publication. It was too profitable to the printers, and it pleased too many members who liked to have their names paraded before the public, to be lightly

abandoned; and it was furtively continued in spite of the opposition of an adverse majority.

Parliamentary reporting, as now understood, may be said to have commenced in the "Gentleman's Magazine" a short time before the great Dr. Samuel Johnson, the lexicographer, essayist, and philosopher, was induced by Cave, the publisher, to sell his talents for small pay to that publication. Cave's first reporter was one William Guthrie, a Scotchman, a *littérateur* of varied acquirements, and with a tenacious memory. He is disparagingly spoken of by Disraeli the elder, in his "Calamities of Authors," as "a great dealer in literature," "a political scribe," "a man of unblushing venality," "a recipient of State bribes," who would hire himself to one lord as he would to another, and as "a stipendiary who would change his principles with his livery." Mr. Disraeli was rather too severe upon this person; for in a time of political agitation, when newspapers had scarcely grown to a fiftieth part of their present importance, and when "leading articles," as they are now called, were scarcely known, it was necessary for the Ministers of the day to make use of the services of pamphleteers to defend their policy against attack, or to carry the war of words and ideas into the quarters of the enemy. Guthrie was one of these pamphleteers, and, as such, deserved his stipend quite as well as a barrister who defends a cause which he is paid to advocate. Besides writing pamphlets, he wrote voluminous histories of England, Scotland, and the World. Sir John Hawkins describes the manner in which Cave and Guthrie managed their Parliamentary business. "Taking with him a friend or two, Cave found means to procure for them and himself admission into the gallery of the House of Commons, or to some concealed station in the other House, and then they privately took down notes of the several speeches, and the general tendency and substance of the arguments. Thus furnished, they adjourned to a neighbouring tavern to compare and adjust their notes, by means whereof, and the help of their memories, they became enabled to fix at least the substance of what they had lately heard and remarked. The reducing this crude matter into form was the work of a future day and an abler hand—Guthrie the historian, whom Cave retained for the purpose." Guthrie had been engaged for two years at this work, and he gradually grew bolder by the impunity he enjoyed, when suddenly the attention of

* This was the Lord Mohun who afterwards fought the fatal duel with the Duke of Hamilton, when both were killed. Lady Mohun, when the dead body of her husband was brought home, expressed her indignation that it should have been laid on her best bed!

Mr. Speaker Onslow was called to the subject, who brought it under the notice of the House. In a debate on the 13th of April 1738, Sir Thomas Winnington wrathfully warned the House of the danger it incurred by tacitly permitting and encouraging such publication. "You will have," said he, "every word that is spoken here by gentlemen misrepresented by fellows who thrust themselves into our gallery; you will have the speeches of the House every day printed, even during your session, and we shall be looked upon as the most contemptible assembly on the face of the earth." Sir William Wyndham took a more sensible view. "*I don't know*," said he, "*but what the people have a right to know what their representatives are doing*." The result was a resolution in nearly the same terms, and in entirely the same spirit as the one which had been carried ten years before:—"Resolved that it is a high indignity to, and a notorious breach of the privileges of this House, for any news-writers in letters or other papers (as minutes, or under any other denomination), or for any printer or any publisher of any printed newspaper of any denomination, to presume to insert in the said letters or papers, or to give therein, any account of the debates or other proceedings of this House, or any committee thereof, as well during the recess as the sitting of Parliament; and that this House will proceed with the utmost severity against any and all such offenders."

Cave seldom went so far in defiance of the House as to publish the names of the members who spoke, but contented himself with giving their initials, as in the following specimens:—

"The speech of Wm. B—ley, Esq., one of the representatives for W—wick, who is rechose for the same place, on making the motion for repealing the Act for Septennial Parliaments, March 13, 1733-34." After reporting the speech at fair length, the reporter adds that, "The motion was seconded by Sir J—n A—yn, Bart., one of the Knights of the Shire of the County of C—nwall."

Yet when the "Gentleman's Magazine" did not report a speech, but merely mentioned the fact that such and such members took part in the debate, it sometimes printed the names at full length, as in the following:—

"The motion thus seconded, a debate ensued, wherein the following gentlemen spoke on the same side—Sir Wm. Wyndham and Sir John Hynde Cotton, Baronet, and Lord Charles Noel Somerset; who were

answered by Sir William Yonge, Sir Robert Walpole, and Sir Wm. Lowther, &c." To this passage is appended a note: "Being well assured that these and the following pieces are originals, we have inserted them as desired, as we shall do any others appearing equally genuine, either singly, or in the course of the debates." Cave was in no hurry to publish, and sometimes a speech did not appear until several months after it had been delivered.

After carrying on this imperfect and unsatisfactory mode of reporting for four years, either Cave or Guthrie hit upon the expedient of presenting the debates in an allegorical fashion—as the debates of the Parliament of Lilliput. The device was transparent, and not particularly ingenious. But it answered its purpose so far as to deter the House from making itself ridiculous by prohibiting such fictions, as it might have done had it come to the conclusion that the cap fitted, and that it was itself the Parliament of Lilliput. Swift had not only discovered Lilliput and Brobdignag, but had invented various uncouth names for his imaginary personages, and Cave and Guthrie followed the example. As to Lilliput, the Dukes and Lords of the Upper House were called "Nardacs" and "Hurgoes," and the members of the House of Commons "Clinabs," their names being indicated under such flimsy veils as Betfort for Bedford, Tolbat for Talbot, Ooyn for Wynn, Waleup for Walpole, Blatirome for Baltimore, Agryl for Argyle, Haxilaf for Halifax, &c. France was Blefurcu; Europe, Degulia; New York, Nova Borac, &c. After Guthrie's dismissal, Dr. Johnson began to labour in the same style on the 19th November 1740, and continued for about two years and a quarter, "fixing upon a speaker's name," as he said to Mr. Nichols, "then making an argument for him, and conjuring up an answer," always managing, as he afterwards told Boswell, "to give the Whig dogs the worst of it." The following will serve as a specimen of the great lexicographer's method, under date of September 1741:—"In the fourteenth of Gorgenti II., on the 24th day of the seventh session of the 8th senate of Great Lilliput, it was ordered that leave be given to bring in a bill for the encouragement and increase of seamen, and for the better and speedier manning his Majesty's fleet.

"The Advocate *Campobell* (Campbell) said—A sailor, sir, after having perhaps willingly entered himself, is either frightened away by the oppression of his officers, or

allured into the service of the merchants by prospect of advantage; but notwithstanding his apprehension on the one side, and his hopes on the other, he is to be seized by violence, and condemned without a crime to that condition which he dreads and abhors. . . . He is dragged to tyranny and hardships, he is punished for endeavouring to avoid them, and involves in the same misery with himself any friend whom charity or gratitude shall prompt to protect him. To infer from the scarcity of seamen that such severities are necessary, is to consult nothing but that lust of dominion by which men are often incited to use violent measures, lest they should seem to make too great concessions by softness and moderation."

Various other speakers are represented as following in the debate, under the names of Admiral Nessor, the Wig (Whig) Gero, the Wig Snodzy, &c. Johnson was not happy in imitating the styles of the various orators into whose mouths he put words. They all spoke Johnsonese. They were all grandiose and ponderous, and never used a short Saxon word where a longer Latin one would answer the purpose. Johnson, who felt that he was made for better things than the conduct of an elaborate hoax, and whose poverty rather than his will had consented to the work, relinquished the post in February 1743, after an uncongenial service of two years and three months; and Dr. Hawkesworth, partly, if not wholly, because he had modelled his style on that of Johnson, was appointed as his successor. Johnson told Boswell in his later years that as soon as he found that people looked upon the speeches as genuine, he determined that he would write no more of them—for he would not be accessory to the propagation of falsehood. "Such," adds his biographer, "was the tenderness of his conscience, that a short time before his death he expressed his regret for having been the author of fictions which had passed for realities. He nevertheless agreed with me in thinking that the debates which he had invented were to be valued as orations upon questions of public importance."

But though Parliament had, as it were, been circumvented by the contrivance of Cave, it was still hostile to the publication of its debates; and in 1747, Cave, and one Thomas Astley, printer of the "London Magazine"—who also published Parliamentary reports—were complained against in the House of Lords, and ordered into the custody of the Black Rod, for printing

in their respective Magazines an account of the trial of Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, for participation in the great Rebellion of 1745. The Peers, however, did not press very heavily against them. After undergoing several examinations at the bar of the House, they were severely reprimanded, and discharged from custody with a caution as to their future behaviour, on payment of the fees. The "Gentleman's Magazine" continued its absurd Debates in Lilliput until 1752, when Cave resumed his original system of publishing real summaries of the debate, with the initials only of the names of the speakers.

It was not until the year 1769 that Parliamentary reporting was placed on a better basis. The two Houses remained as jealous as ever of their privileges, and looked upon the presence of strangers as something only to be justified or tolerated as long as the strangers acted the part of dummies—who might hear, but who would not repeat, what was said. But a stirring time was at hand, and the public interest in politics, always great, was rapidly increasing. Important events were in progress not only in England, but in Europe and America. George III. had been nine years on the throne, and had managed to retain his personal popularity in spite of the unpopular Ministers whom he called to his counsels. The Parliament was corrupt, the Ministry was unscrupulous, the people were discontented. Canada had just been acquired by conquest from France, but the older American colonies were aggrieved by neglect and outraged by taxes imposed upon them by a distant legislature in which they were not represented, and already threatened the rebellion which they converted in later years to a revolution and a successful declaration of their independence. The aristocracy of France was dancing and fiddling on the crater of the revolutionary volcano which was destined so shortly to engulf it, together with all the ancient institutions of the country. The Empress Catharine of Russia, "that great and enterprising woman," as she is called in the "Annual Register for 1763," "was exciting and supporting insurrections of the Greek Christians against the Porte—trying to gain a port in the Black Sea, and plant her foot in Constantinople." The affairs of the Turkish Empire were in a very critical position, and the Sultan was as sick a man in political estimation as he was in 1854. A certain Napoleon Bonaparte was born in Corsica, and a certain Authur Wesley, afterwards called Wel-

lesley, was born in Ireland — to manufacture between them more than a quarter of a century's worth of such tremendous history as Europe had never before known. The Duke of Grafton was Premier of England, described by Junius as one "who became minister by accident, who was adopted without choice, trusted without confidence, and continued without favour," — and one who, he predicted, would, when the proper time came, "be discarded without regret." The Earl of Chatham was in the plenitude of his fame and influence, and had already condemned the policy which was goading the Americans into rebellion; and Junius was puzzling the world — delighting the Liberals — goading and exasperating the Tories — libelling his enemies, sparing not even the King himself, under a cowardly mask that has never since been lifted to the thorough satisfaction of the impartial and unprejudiced public, that has striven to penetrate the secrecy with which he so successfully enshrouded his identity.

Public affairs were in this state when, on the 23d of October 1763, twenty gentlemen in London, feeling the want of a better and more fearless daily newspaper than any of the three then in existence, entered into partnership to establish and conduct a daily morning newspaper in the Whig interest, but more especially to report the debates in Parliament with greater fulness and accuracy. These gentlemen were the pioneers of a political literature and of a daily journalism which have in our day attained vast dimensions. Their names were: William Kenrick, Esq., of St. James's, Westminster; Richard Heighway, Esq., of St. George, Hanover Square; William Griffin, bookseller, Catherine Street, Strand; John Nicod, gentleman, Rupert Street; Thomas Evans, bookseller, Paternoster Row; Samuel Webb, pattern-drawer, Shoreditch; Lewis Lenoir, silversmith, Bell Savage Yard, London; John Richards, gentleman, Somerset House, Strand; David Richards, gentleman, St. Mary le bone; James Spilsbury, Esq., St. Michael, Cornhill; George Kearsley, bookseller, Ludgate Street; James Fletcher, bookseller, St. Paul's Church-Yard; James Robson, bookseller, New Bond Street; William Woodfall, printer, White Fryers, London; Peter Elmsley, bookseller, Strand; Peter Crawford, Esq., Cold Bath Fields; John Murray, bookseller, Fleet Street; James Bowles, stationer, Newgate Street; Henry Barford, upholder, St. James's, Westminster; James Christie, auctioneer, Pall Mall. The name of the proposed

journal was "The Morning Chronicle and Daily Advertiser." The second title was so closely similar to that of the paper in which Junius was dazzling, puzzling, and incensing the political world, as to finally suggest the notion that an opposition was intended. Its specialty, as already stated, was to be the reporting of the Parliamentary debates, in defiance of the rules of both Houses. Its sole reporter as well as printer was William Woodfall. It was nineteen years before the establishment of its afterwards great rival, the "Times," that the "Morning Chronicle" came into existence. Its sole *raison d'être* was Woodfall; and his sole qualification for conducting it was his wonderful power of memory, which had some years previously procured for him the sobriquet of "Memory Woodfall." He was the second son of the printer and proprietor of the "Public Advertiser," and younger brother of Henry Sampson Woodfall, so well known to the people of that age for his mysterious connection with Junius. Both brothers were remarkable men. It is recorded of the elder that before he was five years old he understood Greek, and read a passage from Homer in the original before Alexander Pope with such fluency and correctness that the poet presented him with half-a-crown. He commenced to print and edit the "Public Advertiser" at the early age of nineteen, in conjunction with his father; and at his father's death continued the paper for upwards of thirty years, during which time he declared "that he had been fined by the House of Lords, confined by the House of Commons, and fined and confined by the Court of King's Bench, and indicted at the Old Bailey." His brother William's lines fell in pleasant places. Brought up in his father's printing-office, he was led by his love of the stage to run off to Scotland with a strolling company of players, with whom he remained for some time, and among whom he is reported to have found a young lady whom he afterwards made his wife. On his return to London he resumed the printing business, and at the early age of twenty-four entered into the service of the "Morning Chronicle." He remained connected with that journal for nearly twenty years — first as sole reporter, and, after some time, as editor and reporter. His reports were merely summaries, and even these were not always published until two days after the speeches were delivered. On great occasions, if a great Whig spoke, a request was made to the orator for a copy of his speech, which was pub-

lished when the space at the editor's command permitted, even if it were a couple of months after the event. "Without taking a note to assist his memory," says the obituary notice of Woodfall in the "Annual Register," "and without the aid of an amanuensis to ease his labour, he has been known to write sixteen columns, after having sat in the crowded gallery for as many hours, without an interval of rest."

The other daily papers, of all shades of politics, speedily followed in the track of the Whig "Morning Chronicle," and Parliament began to tolerate a practice which it was unable to prevent. There was consequently no monopoly of reporting; and Woodfall, though *facile princeps* of his art, found himself confronted by many rivals, who relied not on memory alone, but on notes furtively taken, to report the debates with fulness and precision. Among the most noted of the young men who devoted themselves to this pursuit was James Perry, son of a builder at Aberdeen, who, coming to London in 1777, in his twenty-first year, received an engagement, after a hard struggle with adversity, on a paper called the "General Advertiser." On occasion of the memorable trial of Admirals Keppel and Palliser, he was despatched to Portsmouth, whence he transmitted daily eight columns of a report of the proceedings—a great newspaper feat at that time, and a great individual feat at any time. During the trial, the sale of the "General Advertiser" was increased by several thousands a-day, and Perry's reputation as a newspaper man was firmly established. It was Perry who first introduced the system of relays into reporting, for dividing the work formerly undertaken single-handed by such men as Woodfall among several, who took hourly or half-hourly turns in succession to each other.

The "Morning Chronicle" did not prosper greatly under Woodfall's management, and had fallen so low in reputation and value by the year 1789, that the copyright was offered for sale for the small sum of £150. It was purchased by Perry and another young Scotsman named Gray, with money advanced for the purpose by Mr. Bellamy, the keeper of the refreshment-rooms of the House of Commons. Woodfall shortly afterwards set up a paper called the "Diary," which he carried on for a few years with indifferent success. He died in 1803 in comparative poverty, worn out with disappointments, and hard but scantily remunerated labour. Perry was more fortunate. He conducted the Chronicle with spirit and success; set an example of

copiousness and accuracy in Parliamentary reporting which made his journal the most influential and important of its day; acquired a handsome fortune, and spent his superfluity in generous acts, especially towards literary men in the outset of their career, when opportune and delicate as well as liberal aid might help them to tide over the evil day, and march forward, foot-sore perhaps, but relieved and encouraged, on the thorny road that leads to renown. Both Houses of Parliament tacitly acquiesced in the publication of their debates, contenting themselves with an occasional assertion of their right to sit with closed doors, and to punish any offending reporter who erred ever so little in the accuracy of his reports. It was not until after the disastrous expedition to Walcheren, under the Earl of Chatham in 1809, had created an unpleasant feeling both in the House and country, that any serious attempt was made to enforce the standing orders for the exclusion of strangers. While the Earl's personal conduct was under discussion, no objection was made to the presence of the reporters; but when the conduct of the Ministry came under the fire of the Opposition, the standing order was put in force, and all strangers were ordered to withdraw. This occurred on the 25th of January 1810, and for eleven days no Parliamentary reports appeared in the newspapers. On the 6th of February, Richard Brinsley Sheridan moved the appointment of a committee to inquire into the propriety of a step the strict legality of which was not disputed. He expressed his opinion in the most emphatic terms; that the publication of the debates was highly conducive to the public interest. He asserted that the conductors of the public journals in communicating the transactions of the House were guided by the strictest impartiality; that they never exerted any undue influence, or gave way to any improper bias; and that if there were a point on which they were more scrupulous than on any other, it was in correctly and fully communicating the details of evidence that was taken at the bar. He added, "that even if the editors were inclined, from motives of their own, or corrupt views of self-interest, to excite any improper prejudices by mutilated or unjustifiable statements, he was confident that not one of the gentlemen who were in the habit of taking the reports of the House would lend himself to such improper service."

Mr. Wyndham replied to Mr. Sheridan, and though professing himself to be favour-

able to the liberty of the press, he astonished his friends by confessing that he could not see any advantage in the publication of the debates. "What," he asked, "was the value to their constituents of knowing what was passing in that House? If this practice had been tolerated, winked at, and suffered, it was no reason that persons should make a trade of what they obtained from the galleries, amongst which persons were to be found men of all all descriptions—bankrupts, lottery-office keepers, footmen, and decayed tradesmen." "He did not think that reports in the daily papers were so desirable as others did. He did not know any of the conductors of the press, but he understood them to be a set of men who would give in to the corrupt misrepresentation of opposite sides, and he was therefore determined not to lend his hand to abrogate the standing order which was made to correct such an abuse." A long debate ensued, in which Lord Folkestone, Sir Francis Burdett, Mr. Tierney, and Mr. Lyttleton took part. Mr. Sheridan wound up the discussion with a telling speech in reply, when his motion was rejected by one hundred and sixty-six votes to eighty.

The ungenerous and unfounded abuse of the press which had been uttered by Mr. Wyndham excited quite as much surprise as anger—and all the coffee-houses and clubs were full of this subject, which affected the public even more than it did the newspapers. An incident which arose out of it provoked a still more animated, because still more personal, discussion. Among the most eminent of the Whig members of the House was James Stephen, a Master in Chancery, who had formerly been a Parliamentary reporter for the "Morning Post," and was suspected to be a contributor to the "Morning Chronicle." A resolution was passed, and a by-law enacted by the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn (after dinner it was said, and while the bottle was passing), declaring that no one who had ever written for a newspaper for hire should be allowed to enter that Inn as a law-student. The requisition to this effect was signed by eight Benchers, but the by-law was enacted by four only. A Mr. Farquharson, a law-student of Lincoln's Inn, and a Parliamentary reporter, aggrieved by this proceeding, petitioned the House of Commons, and Mr. Sheridan agreed to take charge of the subject. On the 23d of March Mr. Sheridan rose to address the House. The irrepressible Mr. Wyndham immediately, and before Mr. Sheridan had spoken a word, called the

attention of Mr. Speaker to the fact that there were strangers present. The gallery was forthwith cleared. Of course what took place was known all over the town the next day, though no report appeared in the newspapers. Mr. Sheridan, addressing himself to the illiberality of the Lincoln's Inn Benchers, rather than to the Parliamentary question of clearing the galleries, declared that of the twenty-three gentlemen who were at that time regularly employed in reporting the debates in Parliament for the daily press, eighteen had been educated at the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Elinburgh, and Dublin, and that most of these had graduated. The other five had distinguished themselves in other fields of action by their literary attainments. Mr. Wyndham would not remain in the House to listen to the eulogium of a class of men whom he had stupidly, if not maliciously, attacked, but went out ostentatiously whilst Mr. Sheridan was speaking. Mr. Stephen followed Mr. Sheridan, and in an eloquent speech, to be found at full length in *Hansard*, vol. xvi., supported the prayer of the petition. He described the hardships that too often awaited friendless young men of talent at the commencement of their career in London, especially if they devoted themselves to the study of the law, and the immense advantage it was to them to procure such employment as the practice of reporting afforded. He made a great impression on the House by describing the struggles of such a young man studying law by day, reporting the debates by night—qualifying himself for the greater profession of the two that as yet yielded him nothing, by practising the minor but highly honourable and more immediately lucrative vocation which the newspapers afforded; adding that it was no fancy sketch which he drew, for thirty years previously the case had been his own. He also bore testimony to the high character of the Parliamentary reporters as a body, and made special allusion to Mr. Perry and his excellent staff. The Attorney-General opposed the consideration of Mr. Farquharson's petition—not on the merits of the case, which he admitted—but because the remedy lay with the judges rather than with the House of Commons. The Solicitor-General paid a warm compliment to Mr. Stephen, expressed his regret that in an unguarded moment he had signed the requisition to the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn, and his desire for the abolition of the by-law. Sir John Anstruther, also a Bencher of Lin-

coln's Inn, who had neither signed the requisition nor voted for the by-law, suggested that if the subject were allowed to drop in the House of Commons, the Benchers would reconsider the action they had taken. Mr. Croker followed in the same spirit. The motion was withdrawn; and at a subsequent meeting of the Benchers, specially summoned for the purpose, the uncharitable by-law was repealed by a large majority.

Among the speakers who were most strongly opposed to the exclusion of reporters during the debates on the disastrous issue of the Walcheren expedition was Sir Francis Burdett. In the course of the debate he asserted "that the House, in point of character and reputation, had nothing to boast of." For this he was called to order by Mr. Perceval; but Sir Francis retorted by ridiculing "that sensitive delicacy which, while it connived at the most corrupt practices, shrunk from a bare mention of the truth." There was at this time in existence in London a debating club or society known as the British Forum. At a meeting of this society called to discuss the great question of "Strangers in the House," and the evident desire of a majority in Parliament to prohibit the publication of debates in which the people were so deeply interested, one Gale Jones, an apothecary, and a noted demagogue, made such offensive remarks on the conduct of Mr. Wyndham, and more especially on that of Mr. Charles Yorke, that the latter gentleman brought the subject under the notice of the House as a breach of privilege. The House was in the humour of severity. Mr. Gale Jones was summoned to the Bar; and although he apologized to the House for the error into which he had fallen, his apology was not accepted, and he was ordered to be committed to Newgate. Sir Francis Burdett, who was wholly unaware of Mr. Yorke's intention to bring the matter before the House, was not present during this scene. He no sooner heard of what had happened, than he hastened to the House. He inveighed in the severest terms against what had been done—declared it to be an outrage on the right of free discussion—and moved that Mr. Gale Jones should be forthwith discharged out of custody. Fourteen gentlemen voted for the motion, and a hundred and fifty-three against it, and the peccant apothecary was led off to prison. Sir Francis Burdett was full of wrath; and instead of venting any portion of it in the House of Commons, he penned an "Epistle to his

constituents denying the power of the House of Commons to imprison the people of England," which he sent to William Cobbett for publication in his then influential "Register." Sir Francis also issued the letter in the form of a pamphlet, together with his speech in favour of the liberation of Mr. Gale Jones, in which he denounced "the domineering spirit of that unreformed and corrupt assembly, the House of Commons." The House had not recovered its good-temper, or the common-sense which usually characterizes its proceedings; and it was moved and seconded, and carried by a majority of one hundred and ninety against one hundred and fifty, that the letter of Sir Francis was a gross and scandalous libel, and that he should be committed, not to Newgate, as Mr. Gale Jones had been, but to the Tower of London as a State prisoner.

The sergeant-at-arms to whom was intrusted by the Speaker's warrant the duty of capturing the eminent offender, had great difficulty in accomplishing his purpose. Sir Francis had public opinion on his side. He denied the legality of the Speaker's warrant; and successfully defended and barricaded his house in Piccadilly against the sergeant and his force for a whole fortnight. Not only Westminster, of which Sir Francis was the Parliamentary representative, but all London, was in a fever of excitement. The question was considered to be one between a tyrannical Parliament and a free people who had not, but ought to have, the making of Parliaments. Sir Francis was the people's champion, and the people took to the streets with the intention of rescuing him from the sergeant-at-arms, should a capture be effected. The house of Sir Francis in Piccadilly was like a besieged fortress, though the military that were stationed in the street were posted rather to preserve order among the populace than to aid the sergeant-at-arms, or to act any other part than that of observers. The result was the famous Burdett riots, consequent upon the final arrest of the member for Westminster by a ruse, rather than by a *coup de main*, and his transference under military escort to the Tower. All London was in a ferment of agitation. The mob hooted the escort, and pelted them with stones; and on the return of the soldiers from the Tower, where they had safely deposited their prisoner, they were assailed with such volleys of stones that they fired upon the crowd, killing two people, and wounding several others. This increased the popular excitement. Public

meetings were convened night after night to denounce the proceedings of Parliament. Sir Francis was the hero and the idol of the hour. The praise of his pluck and patriotism was on every Radical and Liberal tongue, and filled every Radical and Liberal newspaper. As Parliament had not the power to keep their prisoner in hold an hour after the prorogation of Parliament, it was resolved that on the last day of the session he should be triumphantly escorted from the Tower to Piccadilly, by processions of the trades and of the people generally; and immense mobs with banners and bands of music collected on Tower Hill for that purpose on the day appointed. Great apprehension was felt of a possible and but too probable collision between the troops and the people; but Sir Francis, with a rare discretion in a popular favourite, and not wishing to have the blood of perhaps hundreds of people upon his head, gave his uproarious admirers the slip, and while they were awaiting him in the streets, took a boat at the Tower stairs, and was quietly rowed up the river to Westminster, where on landing he entered a carriage, and was conveyed to his own house before any one knew that he had left the Tower.

This was a very high-handed assertion by the House of Commons of its right to sit with closed doors. It was provocative of public tumult and bloodshed, and if it had occurred among a more excitable people than the English, might have proved the precursor of much greater and more prolonged violence and ill-feeling. Several times during the last sixty years the House has in fits of anger or caprice banished strangers from its galleries, but the occasions have for the most part been temporary and trivial and have excited but little interest, except among the reporters. Possibly, if all the truth were told, these gentlemen are very glad when such acts of Parliamentary authority are exercised, saving them as they do from many hours of hard and responsible work. So thoroughly have both Houses reconciled themselves to the necessity of consenting to publications of their debates; so fully are they convinced that it is not conducive to accuracy that reporters should be compelled to take notes as furtively as if they were picking pockets, and reduced to the extremity of scribbling in their hats, looking as unconcerned all the while as if they were merely listening without a purpose, lest the watchful eyes of justice in the awful form of the irate officers of the

House should detect them *in flagrante delicto*, red-handed, or rather black-handed, in the commission of crime,—that after the great fire which destroyed both Houses in 1834, every architect who sent in plans for the new buildings, included, as a matter of course, a gallery and anterooms in each House for the accommodation of the reporters.

Thus, after a long and losing battle, Parliament has not only practically resigned itself to the inevitable, but has come to the wise conclusion that it is best, alike for Parliament and for the nation, that its debates should be as public as if the whole world were their audience. At present, however, its rigid maintenance of the old theory, that the Speaker has only to be informed that strangers are present, to compel the House to order the said strangers to withdraw, puts too much power into the hands of an individual member, who may happen to be a crochety and unreasonable person.

No less competent and ancient authority than the Book of Job informs us that "great men are not always wise;" and the same may be said in our day of some of the great men who represent us in Parliament. The exercise of the privilege—possibly against the wish of every member in the House but the one who draws this very rusty bolt out of its old armoury—may lead, as in a recent case, which must be fresh in every one's memory, to delay, difficulty, and impediment in the transaction of public business. This last case promises to become historical, and will probably bring about a reconciliation of theory and practice in the procedure of the House as regards the presence of strangers.

The Commons were about to discuss the delicate, and, in some inevitable respects, the very indelicate, details of the Contagious Diseases Act. Anticipating the debate, which should never have been raised, and with a prurient curiosity unpardonable in modest women, a bevy of ladies—or, more properly speaking, "females"—took possession of the gallery set apart for them, and prepared themselves, to all appearances, for the enjoyment of a pleasant evening. But the Fates were unpropitious; and a Scottish member, who had not forgotten how to blush, and who very properly considered that many details fit for scientific discussion by medical men, and for legislative discussion by law-makers, ought not to be, and could not be, openly discussed in the presence of women, availed himself of his right to notify to Mr. Speaker that there were "strangers in the House."

Had it been a case for the reporters alone, there can be no doubt that these gentlemen, in the exercise of the wise discretion which they always employ in their reproduction of the debates, would have taken proper care to purify their reports of all matters and details not fit to be printed. But as the "females" could not be excluded unless all other strangers were excluded along with them, the House was cleared, and for the first time during many years — and possibly for the first time within the memory of men in their early manhood — the morning papers of the following day contained no report of an important Parliamentary debate which had taken place on the previous evening. The Scottish member who took upon himself the responsibility in this case has incurred considerable blame in some quarters — and, as we think, very undeservedly. However much opinions may differ on this point — and it is one into the discussion of which we have no inclination to enter — it has to be said in favour of Mr. Crawford's proceeding, which it was competent for any other member to have adopted, that it has led to the reconsideration of the whole question. It is felt and admitted, both in and out of Parliament, that the two Houses possess, and ought to possess, the right to debate in secret, if they see, or fancy they see, reason to believe that publicity would be injurious to the public or to themselves. Such right is always reserved by courts of law; and much scandal and evil might ensue if the right were not to be recognized in such great courts of law as the Houses of Lords and Commons. Mr. Crawford's exclusion of strangers — twice repeated — is likely to produce good effect in the future: to put the theory and practice of Parliament in accord with each other and with common-sense; and to make the act of exclusion, when for exceptional reasons it is resorted to, the act not of one member, but of the majority of the House, voting on its propriety as it would vote on any other matter brought under its notice. This will be a great point gained, and will rescue a valuable power from the exercise of caprice, and place it in the hands of responsible and deliberate authority. There is no fear in our day that Parliament will ever abuse the right — to most, if not all of its members, the reverse of a pleasure — of making war upon the indispensable "Strangers." Without the "Stranger," Parliament would scarcely be a Parliament — not

even a voice in the wilderness; for it would be no voice at all beyond the limits of its own chamber, unless a voice strangely perverted, and uttering errors where it meant to utter truths.

As it was the "Morning Chronicle" a hundred years ago which first became a powerful "Stranger in the House" — for Dr. Johnson was but a mocking-bird at the best — and which first detailed in fulness to the nation what its representatives said, it may be interesting to conclude this brief history of Parliamentary reporting by recording that the "Chronicle" died of atrophy and inanition, and possibly of mismanagement, in the year 1864, in the ninety-sixth year of its age. A tradition is current among those who affect to know the "inner life" of the newspaper press of the metropolis, that this once powerful journal is not wholly dead; that the copyright of its title is still considered to be of commercial value; and that every now and then, in some dingy back printing-office in Fleet Street or the neighborhood, the forms of another journal are re-arranged, the old title placed in the front as in the days of yore, and a few copies printed, and affixed to the wall of the printing-office aforesaid — so that the printers, the printers' devils, the clerks, and the proof-readers, and a chance customer happening to look in, may be enabled to swear in a court of justice, in case of need, that on such and such a day they saw a newly-issued copy of the "Morning Chronicle;" and that on such and such a day next week, or the week after, they expect the old Whig journal once again to make an appearance.

Many great names besides that of Dr. Johnson might be cited as among those who were once "Strangers in the House," and who, in the exercise of their vocation as reporters, fought their way up to eminence in law or literature. It may suffice to mention "plain John Campbell," afterwards Lord High Chancellor of England; William Hazlitt, a critic of a school which considered criticism one of the finest arts, and one as difficult to excel in as poetry, painting, and music, or any other creative exercise of the mind; and last, greatest, and most brilliant, Charles Dickens, whose recent and too early loss the world deplores. There are others still living who climbed up the same ladder to Fame and Fortune, but whose names it would be indecorous to mention.

From Saint Pauls Magazine.
THE GOOD LA FONTAINE.

FIVE years after the death of Shakspeare, was born Jean de la Fontaine, a man destined equally to fill the earth with his name, and possessing a genius as decidedly unique. The comparison can scarce hold further, unless in this, that the proverbs of both these great men have been ever by the unlearned not only reciprocally misquoted, but that to both have been constantly attributed the best and most remarkable sayings of other writers. Who, for instance, has not heard frequently assigned to Shakspeare the well-known line in Congreve's "Mourning Bride":—

"Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast?"

and as often to la Fontaine the concluding lines of one of Gray's inimitable lyrics:—

"Enough; where ignorance is bliss
'Tis folly to be wise?"

We know too little of the life and earlier manhood of Shakspeare. Of La Fontaine's we know perhaps too much. A legion of contemporaneous friends have vied in their exhaustive gleanings, and we owe it possibly to an abuse of biographical fidelity that traits have been reproduced, as fairly illustrating La Fontaine's life and character, which might have been fairly suppressed as exceptional and inconclusive. Be this as it may, it is clear, from all that has been written of La Fontaine, that his time-honoured appellation of "the good" is, as goodness is generally understood, an egregious misapplication of terms. An indefinable irony clings to the designation of *the good*, preserved historically to the merely wise or powerful; so simple and sublime a title, when conferred in honest faith, has never been less than the price of some particular excellence, displayed in conjunction with the exercise of the moral and social virtues. Yet, in the case of La Fontaine, it has never appeared to be otherwise than sincerely that his compatriots have styled him "Le bon La Fontaine." This anomaly, for such it can be shown to be, may be due to the circumstances that the term was not applied to him till long after his death, and when he spoke only to the people through the medium of his immortal apologue. He was, moreover, of a retiring and moody nature, and little known during his lifetime beyond the circle of his immediate patrons. By these, and indeed by all the literary men of his time, La Fontaine was esteemed in due proportion to his worth; and, be-

fore his decline, had earned the surpassing title of *l'inimitable*, and that with the unanimous and ungrudging assent of the Academy.

It is much to be regretted that this prior title was not allowed to remain to him. In the case of no other author has time more thoroughly confirmed its justice. La Fontaine was not only inimitable as a living writer, but has since defied the competition of two hundred years. There is but one La Fontaine, as there is but one Shakspeare, and each has attained perfection in his separate and dissimilar endowment.

In excepting, however, to La Fontaine's title to be distinguished as "the good," we must not be supposed to represent him as wanting in all that constitutes conventional goodness. He possessed, on the contrary, many amiable qualities. He was unaffected, truthful, and compassionate; he stood firmly by his friend in trouble, and was invariably patient and forgiving. But as a companion he was most often absent and oblivious; as a guest he was sensual and uncourteous. In his estate and household he was disorderly and prodigal. His private life will scarcely bear the friendliest inspection, and he stands convicted, by the verdict of his most indulgent partizans, of being a bad husband and an unnatural father. Much that has been written of him might be rejected as incredible, were it not for the corroboration of independent witnesses, and those who would cull materials for a striking sketch, have abundant means at their disposal. There is, nevertheless, an advantage in composing a memoir from sources so various and unconnected, affording, as it does, the chance of being occasionally new to the general reader, who may before have been rationally satisfied with one or two only of the many accounts that have been published.

La Fontaine was born at Château-Thierry, in the year 1621. His father held a government situation as Inspector of the Woods and Forests. His education was neglected, and, at the age of seventeen, he was unable to do more than construe his Virgil with the aid of his grammar and dictionary. At nineteen he entered the oratory, with the view of becoming a priest; but he soon found it was not his vocation to submit to rules, and he accordingly returned to his family within eighteen months of his matriculation. At twenty-one his father gave up to him his office of inspector, and shortly afterwards married him to Marie Héricart, a young lady of superior attainments and of great

personal beauty. Into both these engagements he entered with listless submission, consulting his indolence rather than his taste, and preferring guidance to the fatigue of choice. It followed that his charge, though he held it for twenty years, was constantly neglected; and, as regards his wife, whose humour was imperious and temper sour, he kept out of her way continually, and allowed her to rival him at will in dissipating the family estate. He nevertheless held her judgment in esteem; and consulted her on all matters of business which he deemed important.

La Fontaine's father was addicted to making verses, and did all in his power to induce his son to take to poetry. But nothing seemed to move the latter from his lethargic indifference, and he attained his twenty-second year before discovering the slightest symptom of the existence of a passion which was destined so soon to absorb and captivate his entire soul. An accident one day revealed the latent germ, and developed, at once and for ever, not only the taste for verses, but also that internal conviction without which the art of verse-making can never be a serious and enduring profession. Being one evening at supper with some military friends at the garrison of Château-Thierry, an officer recited to the company an ode of Malherbe. La Fontaine appeared struck dumb with admiration, and, suddenly, as he himself relates it, he felt the sacred fire ignite within his breast. On his return home he employed himself in committing to memory the whole of the volume which contained the ode; and from that time forth he devoted his time exclusively to original versification. His first model was Malherbe, whom he continued to imitate till advised by a judicious friend to reform his taste with Horace, Virgil, Terence, and Quintilian. This counsel he immediately followed, and his productions soon afterwards afforded proof of his having done so with amazing profit. The only French authors whom he read with pleasure were Rabelais, Marot, and d'Urfé; and he could scarcely, perhaps, have better chosen for the kind of excellence he aimed at. From time to time he read the writings of other Frenchmen, but only at long intervals, and by little at a time. The Italians, he said, were more diverting; and, of all the Italian school, his favourites were Ariosto and Boccaccio. These two latter he read and re-read with untiring avidity, perpetually imitating their style, until, according to his contemporary, Milton, he succeeded in surpassing it.

But, strange as the assortment may appear, La Fontaine delighted also in Plato and Plutarch. So eccentric a mingling appears at first sight to be the offspring of a pitiable vanity; but it must be remembered, in the first place, that with La Fontaine, affectation in any shape was constitutionally impossible, and secondly, that a genius so profoundly original was exempted by nature herself from the observance of rules incompatible with its natural condition. To La Fontaine's vision, the union of such extremes as that of Rabelais with Plato, may have presented those laughing images which abound in all his writings, and which render wisdom easy to the clumsiest intelligence. Certain it is that he studied Plato with the same diligence as Rabelais, copies of both having been found after his death, interlined from the beginning to the end with annotations in his own handwriting.

La Fontaine had now passed some years in absolute seclusion, seeing only his intimate acquaintances, and becoming daily more insensible to the distractions of the outer world. The profits of his pen exempted him for a while from the odious need of feigning to inspect the woods and forests, and he consigned his charge to chance, prepared to resign it at the first hostile signal from his official superior. From this supreme beatitude the happy poet was roused unexpectedly by the effect of a malignant farce. A retired captain of dragoons, who had established his retreat at Château Thierry, and had become a constant visitor at La Fontaine's house, began, from his supposed attentions to Madame La Fontaine, to attract the notice of the idle gossips of the neighbourhood. The idea was simply absurd, the captain was over sixty years of age, and by no means of the gallant species. He was something of a literary turn of mind, and in the absence of the husband, who was usually absorbed in his papers, or in the wood declaiming verses, took naturally pleasure in the society of the accomplished wife. An officious and ill-disposed acquaintance hinted the suspicion, and soon persuaded La Fontaine, who gave credit to the insinuation as to a truth not worth examining, that his honour was compromised, and that he owed it to himself and to the public to demand reparation.

Without another word, and as if anxious to be rid at once of a plaguing obligation, the poet unhung his sword, and went straight to the captain, whom he placidly invited to follow him into the wood, as he

had something private to say to him, of an immediate and pressing nature. The captain obeyed in mute astonishment, unable to guess what had happened, but shrewdly divining mischief from the unusual apparition of the sword. On arriving at a convenient spot, La Fontaine shortly, and without the slightest sign of emotion, explained the purport of the interview, and called on the captain to defend himself. The captain drew accordingly, but wished to expostulate. The poet, however, allowed no time for parleying, and began the attack with vigour. The combat was soon over. By a movement well known and easy to the skilful fencer, the captain sent his opponent's sword flying to some yards' distance, and thereupon tendered his hand in token of reconciliation. La Fontaine took it immediately, declared honour satisfied, and accepted the captain's invitation to go home with him to breakfast. No sooner at table, than he appeared to have forgotten the only one warlike incident of his life, resuming the subjects which occupied his mind in general, and conversing gaily on his future literary projects. On taking leave of him, the captain alluded to the occurrence of the morning, and delicately volunteered to discontinue his visits to Madame La Fontaine. "By no means!" exclaimed the poet eagerly, "I fought with you this morning for the sake of the public, as I was told my honour required it. I shall fight you again on my own account, unless you promise to continue to come to my house as if nothing had occurred between us."

Shortly after his ridiculous encounter with the captain, La Fontaine paid his first visit to Paris, on the invitation of the Duchess de Bouillon. The literary attractions of the capital soon made on him a sensible impression, and he subsequently discovered a pretext for repeating his visit on every possible occasion. His real motive appears to have been chiefly to escape from his wife, whom he found getting less appeasable as she increased in age, and who was constantly reminding him of his duty. His finances, however seldom admitted of a long stay; for whatever his gains, his expenditure invariably exceeded them, and Madame at home continued to be as prodigal as he. Piece by piece the patrimony was sold and dissipated; the common estate was then resorted to, till nothing at length was left but what had been rendered inalienable by the marriage contract.

Meanwhile La Fontaine's fame had procured him powerful protectors. Amongst

these was Madame de la Sablière, a well-known patroness of letters, and competent, from her own attainments and discerning judgment, to distinguish and appreciate her singularly gifted *protégé*. Her liberality was at first conveyed to La Fontaine in the shape of handsome fees for poems bespoken professionally; till, beoming more and more enamoured with his talents, and knowing his hatred of all business, as well as his utter indifference to everything postponable without risk of instant annihilation, she invited him to take up his abode at her hotel in Paris, where she offered him hospitality in permanence, as one of her immediate family.

Matrons have denounced as immoral Madame de la Sablière's arrangement for La Fontaine, and in spite of all claim to regard the case as eminently exceptional, have bestowed on the deserted wife their exclusive and entire sympathy. Nor has the least palliation been admitted from the circumstance that La Fontaine was able, from Paris, to remit his wife money which he could not have supplied her with had he remained her companion at Château Thierry. It is not for the biographer to criticise a judgment proceeding from so authorized a source, but the historical fact remains, that from La Fontaine's installation at his friend's hotel dates the commencement of his world-wide reputation. Dispensed from all pecuniary cares, and severed definitely from scenes that worried and disturbed him, he was able thenceforth to consecrate his whole soul to letters without distraction or interruption. The result was that one small octavo volume which, in a hundred pages, distills the wisdom of a thousand schools. The fables have long since passed out of the region of criticism; where copies or imitations, they are held by the assent of all men to have surpassed their originals, and where original, they take the foremost rank amongst the gems of European literature. Their profoundness, and at the same time their infinite simplicity, are consigned unalterably to the author's credit in his contrasting, but equally undisputed, titles of "The Inspired Innocent," and "The Solomon of Poets;" and were testimony wanting to their general worth as didactic compositions, we have that of Frederic the Great,—a royal, but somewhat crabbed student, who read with avidity, but praised with caution. Maupertius was a great admirer of Jean Sobieski, and often spoke of him in his interviews with the king. On one occasion Frederic, whose respect for Sobieski was somewhat less profound,

replied pettishly in French : — " Tu m'embêtes avec ton Jean Sobieski ; je ne reconnais que trois Jeans qui vaillent la peine d'en parler : ce sont Jean le Baptiste ; Jean l'Évangéliste, et Jean le Fabuliste." Napoleon I., who read so little, was a constant reader of La Fontaine. Observing that even children were entertained by the fables, he expressed regret that so much was lost to them from inability to seize the illusions. May not such considerations be allowed some weight in establishing, so to speak, the isolated oneness of the judgment in appeal and in so far redeeming the independent and penetrating La Sablière from the reproach of having demoralized La Fontaine ?

At Madame de la Sablière's La Fontaine became speedily acquainted with the literary celebrities of the capital, and greedily imbibed the rich instruction they afforded him. He allied himself especially to Racine, Boileau, Bernier, and Chappelle. With Racine he delighted to read Homer, and his comments have been preserved as curious relics of his unstudied style. The beauties of Homer were, nevertheless, half veiled from him by the Latin rendering, as he was too weak in Greek to attempt to read the original. Racine treated him altogether paternally ; took him about with him to his friends, and scolded or encouraged him according to his behaviour. He relates of him an anecdote which thoroughly exemplifies the charming *naïveté* of his natural faith and character. He one day persuaded La Fontaine to accompany him to tenebræ, where the length of the service soon tired his attention, and caused him to look around for distraction. Racine, observing this, put into his hand an ancient Bible, which opened accidentally at the Prayer of the Jews in Baruch. La Fontaine soon became absorbed in the perusal, till, quite forgetting he was at church, and in the midst of divine service, he turned suddenly on Racine, and exclaimed aloud, " I say, who's this Baruch ? Why, do you know, he's a fine genius ?" For some days afterwards he could think of Baruch and nothing else, and, without the slightest introduction, put the somewhat embarrassing question to each acquaintance he fell in with, " I say, Monsieur So-and-so, have you read Baruch ? He was a fine genius !"

The anecdote itself may be well known to the reader, but not so, possibly, the fact that at the time, a proverb sprung from it, which is still in vogue amongst persons of the educated class in France. With such it is usual to reply to an unconnected proposition, when started so abruptly as

to take by surprise, " Dites done, Monsieur un tel, avez-vous lu Baruch ?"

When in familiar talk with chosen friends, and on subjects which interested him, La Fontaine's face, which was heavy, and even sluggish in composure, became alive with light and joy. At such moments his conversation resembled his writings, tripping and elegant, but filled with sense and meaning. His friends looked at him and listened, and he usually talked on unconsciously till the lights burnt down in their sockets and the ladies rose to go. Grievously put out were those who allured him to their homes to excite him to talk, and who invited friends to hear him. On such occasions he usually sat either taciturn and fixed, or grossly absorbed in the dinner. He is said to have been sadly given to the pleasures of the table, but perhaps only when in presence of the table-cloth ; he is not supposed to have had gluttonous thoughts, or in any shape to have deified his appetite. He ate, at all events, prodigiously, but preferred dining from a dish that pleased him, to varying his dinner with several. His friends have sometimes amused themselves by helping him by degrees to an entire dish, the others by design declining it. In such cases no concert or adroitness was at all necessary ; La Fontaine noticed absolutely nothing. He was, indeed, so utterly unobservant of all that surrounded him, that it was all but insipid to play tricks on him. He was by no means particular in his diet. Few things displeased him if cooked sufficiently, and he appeared not always aware, in matters of food, of even the most specific distinctions. He disliked oysters and sage-cheese, and had a strange aversion to gravy ; but with those few exceptions he seemed happy with a plateful of anything. He was, nevertheless, particularly fond of poultry, and it is related of him that, being at dinner one day with indifferent friends at Neuilly, the lady of the house, thinking to provoke his genius with a weighty problem, asked him, with affected gravity, what he would deem the extreme term of happiness as accessible to human sensibilities ? " Fricassee fowl, Madame," replied La Fontaine, after a short pause, and with a constraint of tone bespeaking the effort it had cost him to understand the question. He then relapsed immediately into his boorish absence, and presently fell asleep. On another occasion he accepted an invitation to breakfast, offered him by a minister of state, whose friends were extremely desirous of making the poet's acquaintance. Punctually at

twelve—the hour named—La Fontaine arrived at the minister's hotel. He was, nevertheless, the last arrival, from the eagerness of the guests to be present at the poet's entry. La Fontaine took his seat at once, dispensing himself from all further ceremony than a general bow to the assemblage. The repast was choice and abundant, the guests merry and convivial. La Fontaine alone kept silence, eating and drinking with diligence, and imparting to no one the heavy reflections which seemed to occupy his mind. Having satisfied his appetite, he began to appear sleepy, and glances were exchanged across the table. Presently he rose to go, excusing his departure on the pretext of having to attend at the Academy. His host reminded him that the Academy was close by, and that there was nearly an hour before the opening of the sitting. "I'll go the longest way," replied the poet, continuing to adjust his mantle; and, without another syllable, he shambled out of the banquet-room, leaving his friends at table to discuss him as their pleasure directed.

When heated with discussion, La Fontaine ceased to listen to his opponent, and heard nothing of what others said around him. At a supper where Molière and Despréaux were amongst the guests, the conversation fell on the machinery of the stage; La Fontaine condemned the *à part* (or words spoken aside, and supposed to be heard exclusively by the audience). "What," he exclaimed, "can be more contrary to good sense than to suppose an actor can be heard by the audience in the parterre and gallery, and not by another actor standing close beside him?" It was in vain to urge that the fiction was extremely convenient, and in *vivâ voce* representations almost impossible to substitute. La Fontaine talked on, getting louder and louder, and threatening to become tiresome to the company. At last Despréaux, winking to the other guests, began calling him aloud all sorts of names: "La Fontaine must be certainly a great scoundrel; La Fontaine is a great gander; a blockhead, a calf, a famous owl," &c., &c. These words he repeated incessantly, till at length La Fontaine, remarking all at once that every one in the room was laughing, inquired quietly what the matter was. "What!" said Despréaux, "here am I, hoarse with calling you all the hardest names I can think of, and you don't hear me, although I am near enough to you to touch your elbow, and yet you think it extraordinary that one actor should be unable to hear an-

other, who may be ten paces away from him?"

On the other hand, La Fontaine never grew disconcerted through raillery, nor lost his temper an instant under the most galling pleasantries. It might have been said of him in slang language that he "stood chaff admirably;" but this to such a damaging extent, that his patience was frequently in danger of passing for total insensibility. With strangers he was certainly completely indifferent, but with friends, what appeared to be indifference, was in reality preoccupation. An instance of this excluding absence occurred at the house of Molière, where La Fontaine had been invited to meet Descôteaux, a celebrated player on the flute. Descôteaux played, and the guests were in rapture; La Fontaine, however, paid no attention whatever to the artist, and went off as usual into one of his flattering trances. Greatly annoyed at this, Despréaux and Racine attacked him successively, and from joke to joke, proceeded at last to personal and bitter sarcasms. This, in turn, grieved Molière, who was much attached to La Fontaine, and was unwilling to see him sacrificed, even to pacify an insulted celebrity. After supper he called La Fontaine aside, and expressed the deepest concern at his having been so badly treated by his friends, Despréaux and Racine. "Ah, yes," replied La Fontaine, totally misunderstanding the purport of his host's observation, "I am afraid really I was too hard upon them." He then finished quietly another pint of claret, and took his leave in the gayest humour imaginable.

La Fontaine's actions were neither premeditated nor followed up. One half of them appear to have been the pure effect of hazard, and the other suggested, and even dictated, to him by others. It was thus, after his wife had resided for a time in Paris, and ultimately returned to Château Thierry, irreconcilably offended with her husband, that his friends represented to him the un-Christian and dishonouring character of such a separation, and recommended an immediate accommodation. La Fontaine at once, and without a moment's deliberation, started for Château Thierry. On alighting from the diligence, without any delay, and in all honesty of purpose, he went straight to his wife's residence. There the servant, who did not know him, informed him his mistress was gone to vespers. Tired of waiting, La Fontaine strolled off to call on an old friend, who detained him to dinner, and

persuaded him to pass the night. Next morning, after breakfast, charmed with his friend's reception, and glowing with the effects of his unctuous hospitality, he forgot entirely what brought him to Château-Thierry, and returned by the diligence to Paris without in any way accomplishing the object of his journey. On hearing of his surprisingly quick return, his friends pressed round him in a body, anxious to learn the result of his overtures of peace to Madame La Fontaine. "Ah," he replied, "yes"—speaking slowly as if to recall his recollections—"I did call on Madame, but the servant told me she was gone to vespers."

La Fontaine was domineered by his passion for letters to an extent which at times became truly distressing to his real friends. His one muse enthralled his intellectual liberty, and insensibly petrified his heart. He not only laid at her feet his priceless talents, but too often his sense of right, his conscience, and even his paternal charity. The almost incredible story of his forgetting the existence of his only son is too amply corroborated to admit of doubt. Neglected in his education, and left to all the perils of premature emancipation, the youth was rescued and adopted by his father's tried and good friend, the President Harlay. From the moment of his removal, although previously on terms with him of uninterrupted amity, the father forgot the son entirely, and was not known afterwards to inquire for or even to allude to him.

Under such circumstances, and having regard to the father's example, it was deemed advisable to sever the tie completely, and the son was exiled accordingly to the provincial college of Montpellier, where, by privilege, he remained on the foundation till he had completed the compulsory courses, and passed to the faculty of rhetoric. He then travelled during eighteen months with the President's nephew, and was ultimately re-introduced to his father after an absence of between five and six years. The meeting was arranged as a surprise, at the house of a common acquaintance, where the father dined with the son without once recognizing his features or even suspecting his identity. After the son's departure the President asked the father what he thought of the young gentleman who had been their guest at dinner and who had just left them. La Fontaine answered that he thought him modest and distinguished, and, for his age, extremely well informed. "Well, then," said the Presi-

dent, "do you know who it is? It is your own son!" "Ah, indeed," replied La Fontaine, "I am glad to hear it." And with that he dismissed the subject, as of a pleasing incident that had had its turn.

La Fontaine's extreme indifference took at times the form of positive physical insensibility. One morning, Madame de Bouillon, going to Versailles, found him absorbed in a reverie under one of the trees of the Grand Avenue. Returning in the afternoon, she found him on the same spot and almost in the same posture, although the weather was raw and rain had fallen in the interval. Rousing him from his abstraction, she bade him observe that he was blue with cold, and that his garments were all wet. The poet started, and began hurriedly to feel his clothes. Then, as though he feared by so doing he should be thought to express disbelief in a lady's word (he was always exceptionally courteous to ladies), he kept repeating—"Ah! Madame me fait savoir que j'ai froid, et que j'ai la veste toute trempée; c'est très-aimable de la part de Madame."

Another distraction would seem to raise the presumption that La Fontaine was the original of Dominic Sampson. His friend and protectress, Madame de la Sablière, was in the habit of replacing his old garments with new ones, on observing that the former were getting unsightly. The poet, though watched with curiosity, was never observed to notice the change, and it was by no means in his character to affect or simulate. He was one day surprised beyond measure at being jocosely complimented in the street on a magnificent new mantle, which he had no idea was other than the one he wore habitually.

Nothing could be more ingenuous, or even more grotesquely naïf, than his air and manner. His infantine surprise at the simplest novelties that attracted his attention, his wondering look, the embarrassing simplicity of his questions, and sometimes his awkward truthfulness, made him at once the amusement and dread of his acquaintances. His best friends even, were compelled to separate him from his genius, and divide him into two parts—the poet and the automaton. It was thus that Madame Sablière, writing one day to a friend that, in a domestic rage, she had sent off all her servants at once, and jesting from the natural impression created by the poet's ungainly manners and exterior, concluded her account as follows:—"J'ai fait maison nette; je n'ai gardé avec moi que mes trois animaux—mon chien, mon chat, et mon La Fontaine."

On one unpardonable occasion, La Fontaine's blank obliviousness betrayed him, and with him his companions, into an act of absolute indecency. He totally forgot the death of an acquaintance, at whose burial he had assisted only a few days previously. The deceased, by name Stumpff, had been a boon companion of the poet's, and at his board was open hospitality for friend and friend's associates. La Fontaine invited some congenial souls to drop in with him unexpectedly at his friend's at pudding-time, assuring them that an impromptu supper at Stumpff's was no bad feast. On arriving at the house, La Fontaine knocked, and inquired of the porter if the deceased were visible. The porter, astonished at the question, from one whom he knew to have been present at the interment, replied a little moodily — "Why you know, sir, my master has been dead these eight days!" "Eight days!" ejaculated the poet with unfeigned emotion, — "Dear me! I could never have supposed it to be so long."

Instances might be multiplied of a type no less degrading to a mind endowed otherwise with the rarest and most useful gifts; but there is danger, in recording such, of reproducing what may be already familiar to the reader of biographies. It is, moreover, grateful to turn from these humbling traits to those which help the diviner physiognomy of so incomprehensible a genius. One feature above all others redeems the doubtful cast of La Fontaine's moral qualities; when consulted by a friend in trouble, instantaneously, and as if by magic, he rose out of himself, and became at once a sound and valuable counsellor. This would seem to point to an existing foundation of goodness, though deep down, and accessible only to urgent and irrecusable occasions, such, for instance, as the necessities of a friend in trouble. One anecdote, of many, may suffice to illustrate this singular metamorphosis. A young man of his acquaintance, sub-secretary to the receiver-general, had committed a morally venal, but according to the rules of the office, an irremissible delinquency. Despairing of his future, the culprit ran to La Fontaine, hoping more from his childlike intercession than from any diplomatic mediation on the part of interested relations. "Monsieur," said La Fontaine, "that which you ask me to do is not that which will save you. Go at once to your chief; avow all, and disarm him by your candour. Fortunately, you have lost no time thus far; lose none at present; go

quickly to your superior officer, and you may yet crave all the merit of a timely confidence." Observing the young man to hesitate, La Fontaine rose from his seat, seized him by the arm, and there and thence conducted him to the receiver's residence. Knocking at the door himself, he pushed the young man inside, and whispered he should wait for him in the street. In less than an hour the happy postulant returned, radiant with expansion, and overwhelming his adviser with acknowledgments. He had received, he said, a painful lesson, but, at the same time, a pardon, on possible and humane conditions.

La Fontaine was never known to answer criticism, nor even to justify his views to his most familiar friends. Once only, on the instigation of others, he took literary vengeance; but even of that one exception he repented, and offered voluntary reparation. Lulli, the celebrated Florentine composer, once took it into his head to get from him an opera. The undertaking was by no means to La Fontaine's taste, but he yielded at length to Lulli's cajoling ways and princely promises. The engagement being made, the composer exacted its immediate commencement and undeviating continuance. From the moment he began, the poor poet had no peace; late and early Lulli was at his elbow, ardent, busy, and impatient. Each day he brought back sheets for alteration, changing his mind incessantly, and wearying the poet's patience with unconscionable requisitions.

At last, after four months' persecution, the opera was finished and approved. Then, suddenly, without a word of explanation, Lulli abandoned both La Fontaine and his opera, and adopted instead the *Aleeste* of Quinault, which he subsequently set to music, and which was eventually played at court before the royal assemblage at St. Germain. La Fontaine declined to resort for redress to legal proceedings, although, in addition to his claim for labour done, he had critics of established credit to attest the literary value of his work. His friends endeavoured to proceed without him, but he positively refused to sign the power required to enable the procuror to act in his name. In the end, however, he allowed himself to be persuaded that satisfaction was due to his friends, and, to appease their indignation, he composed his pithy satire of "Le Florentin," in which he alludes to Lulli's bad treatment of him in terms quite touching from their pathetic simplicity. Rendered verbatim, the words run as follows:—

"He made me work long for him —
He came, awakening a child of the nine sisters,
A grey-bearded child, who should not have
been his dupe:
He was nevertheless, and will be ever dupe —
One more such deceiver, and I shall be broken
in my old age."

The piece had vogue at court, and Lulli felt keenly the reprobation it exposed him to. La Fontaine received the congratulations of his friends on the success of his diatribe, but they had on him the contrary effect to that intended. He felt for Lulli, and soon afterwards expressed his feeling in one of his epistles to Madame de Thanges. After excusing himself with great good taste and dignity, he speaks thus of his advisers: —

"Counsels! and whose? of the public;
That is to say, the town, the court;
All sorts of characters; the friend and the in-
different;
Such urged me to employ what little bile I
had.
None could suffer that insult to my fame.
Did I deserve it? They say not."

La Fontaine was loved and esteemed by his colleagues at the Academy, amongst whom he moved and conversed with that candour and urbanity, which, when not natural, can neither be affected nor acquired. Simple, sweet-tempered, ingenuous, and sincere, he never had with one of them the smallest word of altercation or slightest shadow of misunderstanding; and even when the academician Furetière had proved himself unworthy to retain his seat, La Fontaine could not bring himself to aid in his expulsion, and he accordingly determined to support him to the extent of his influence. The voices were in the majority hostile, and the final test was demanded by the president. La Fontaine adhered to his purpose, but was unfortunately overtaken by one of his ordinary distractions at the moment of going to the ballot, and deliberately placed his ball in the wrong compartment of the urn. This added a vote to the heavy list of "noes" already accumulated, and the offending member was expelled. Furetière is said to have never forgiven what he spitefully described as La Fontaine's bestial indolence and wilful abandonment of self-command.

Madame de la Sablière died suddenly, and without carrying into execution the testamentary intentions she was known to have for La Fontaine. At her decease the poor poet found himself in sadly altered circumstances. For many years he

had existed in unconscious ease, with every commodity appearing unbidden before him, and spoiled by a too thoughtful and indulgent patroness. He had grown old in ignorance of the pains of procuring a subsistence, or of the cost of life in any shape. After floundering through a few months of helpless discomfort, wronged by his domestics, and mystified by the simplest transactions of daily commerce, he began to fall into discouragement, and at last thought seriously, though much against his inclination, of closing with an invitation, lately made to him by his literary admirers in London, to pass over to Great Britain, and accomplish his decline in exile.

Just then he heard with joy of the return to Paris from abroad of his old friend Gaspard d'Hervart, who, after Madame de la Sablière, had ever been his warmest and most constant supporter. Without hesitation, or giving a thought to those considerations of propriety which arrest the wills of ordinary mortals, La Fontaine decided at once on finishing his days with his privileged though unconsulted friend. Whilst making his preparations for departure, the door opened, and D'Hervart entered the room. His first visit was for his dear old friend the poet, and he came, though still incommoded by the effects of a trying journey. After the first greeting, he hastened to say that he came expressly to invite La Fontaine to come and remain at his house as a permanent and honoured inmate — "*Oh, I was going to,*" replied La Fontaine with simplicity, at the same time remarking gaily how singularly happy it was that his friend and he should have hit precisely on the same idea. "True," said D'Hervart; "but as you were coming to me of your own accord, I grieve to have invited you. I have lost that touching proof of your confidence in my affection."

Towards the end of 1692 La Fontaine fell dangerously ill. Up to that period he had lived in perfect unconcern as to all that regarded the life to come. The natural law directed his untroubled heart; and, as he afterwards confessed, he had never even experienced the intellectual curiosity inspired in many minds by the suspicion of a spiritual accountability. On hearing of his illness, the curé of St. Roch despatched to him the père Poujet, vicar of the parish, and a man better fitted than himself for the delicate mission to be accomplished. To remove all suspicion as to the object of his visit, the père Poujet went accompanied by Ernest Lilian, an old friend of the poet's; and, as to himself, he was able to

use the name of his own father, also a friend of the poet's, and who desired to have news of his health. After the politeness of usage, the priest insensibly led the conversation to subjects of religion, discoursing on the proofs acquired both from natural and revealed resources, and designedly addressing his remarks exclusively to Ernest Lilian. La Fontaine listened at first with the indifferent attention paid usually to matters in which the listener claims no concern, till, hearing mention made of the New Testament, he exclaimed with his usual *naïveté*, — "The New Testament! Ah, yes; some years ago I read the New Testament, and I can assure you it is a very good book." Attracted further, he described his impressions; and remarked, amongst other things, that the doctrine of eternal pains appeared to him inconsistent with the alleged goodness of the Creator. Challenged thus on his own territory, the priest was enabled to dissent with sanction, and succeeded, one by one, in satisfying the poet's objections. He then discreetly took his departure, leaving Lilian alone with his friend, to ascertain and report on the result of the conversation. The report was favourable, and the priest was encouraged to return. La Fontaine grew, first attentive, then anxious, and finally eager. By degrees the priest increased the number of his visits, till he ended by attending regularly twice a day. He afterwards declared to the curé he had never administered so docile and truth-seeking a penitent. His great difficulty had been to reconcile with the completeness of the Redeemer's atonement, the prescriptions of the dogma in regard to exterior mortification. It is not the place here to inquire by what argument the priest succeeded in establishing that doctrine; it is certain the poet accepted it; for at his death, which occurred two years afterwards, on undressing the corpse for the usual mortuary preparation, it was found to be covered with a hair shirt.

The surrender of his heart also cost the poet a struggle, though he ultimately made it unreservedly; and, to the complete satisfaction of his confessor. As a condition of the viaticum, the priest exacted an authentic recantation of the *Contes*, with a formal expression of his sorrow for having edited so immoral a publication. The poet meekly urged that the writing of the *Contes* had not in any way stirred his own evil passions, and that he therefore hoped the reading of them might not stir those of others. Such reasoning, however, soon gave way before the earnest eloquence of

the père Poujet, and the paper was duly signed and published in the form desired.

Far harder was the internal strife with respect to his darling comedy. The piece was unpublished, and was his last and, according to his own judgment, his best theatrical production. The priest condemned it, no less than the *Contes*, as being hostile to pure morality, and demanded its sacrifice as an offering of expiation. The poet sighed, and thought the sentence too severe; but the priest declared sternly he must decide between God and Mammon. The only concession possible was that due to the admitted sincerity of the poet's own opinion of his work; and, to meet this, it was agreed to submit the question, as one of simple casuistry, to a committee of Doctors of the Sorbonne.

The submission was made, and the decision was in condemnation of the comedy. La Fontaine thereupon burnt it, without retaining sketch or copy; and, as the text of the manuscript remained an official confidence with the members of the committee, the subject never transpired, and the name itself remains unknown.

The père Poujet relates that in his privileged work of evangelizing the great La Fontaine, he encountered a formidable adversary in a somewhat insignificant personage. This was no other than the nurse. As did all serving inferiors who were brought into immediate contact with the poet, she treated him as an infant incapable of self-direction. She talked of him aloud before his friends, rebuked him if he spoke out of season, and flattered or pooh-poohed him at discretion. She usually took his part against the priest, whom she considered too hard on his infirmities; and on one occasion she suddenly interrupted the discussion with an exclamation of impatience: "Eh! ne le tourmentez donc pas tant, Monsieur l'Abbé; il est plus bête que méchant!"

But the chief danger of the nurse's influence lay in her constant counteraction of the abbe's teaching. She was ever soothing the patient with illusory consolation, and misleading his truthful spirit with ignorant conclusions. In vain the priest confounded her perversity before the patient; she as openly rebuked his hardness, and insisted on the saving merits of La Fontaine's harmless life. One morning, regarding the recumbent poet with compassion, she exclaimed, as the père Poujet was taking his departure;—"Say what you will, Monsieur l'Abbé, the Almighty will never have the courage to damn that man."

La Fontaine died 13th March, 1695, in his seventy-eighth year, and was buried, side by side with Molière, in the parish churchyard of St. Joseph. His death took place at the residence of his friend D'Hervart, whose widow took pride in showing the room the poet died in, as at Rome the death-chamber of Cicero was formerly exhibited to strangers.

To review the fables of La Fontaine would, in the present day, be at once presumptuous and superfluous. The judgments passed on them are so numerous and united that an approving critique might almost be selected for each fable. Apologists have been even found for his negligences, to which designs have been attributed with more or less probability. He is supposed, for instance, to have feigned inadvertence to evade the political sense inferable from certain courtly innuendos, and in those days of bondage it is not impossible that such may have been his prudent artifice.

Of the whole collection, "La Chêne et le Roseau," is admitted to be the most remarkable for sublime simplicity. The most striking portrait of injustice and depravity is drawn in the various attitudes of the beasts in council in "Les Animaux Malades de la Peste." The "Singe dans Paris" is the one exception to the habitual mildness and good-nature of La Fontaine's muse. Its caustic sarcasm draws blood, and would seem to be unaccountable from any known or imputable incentive. "Le Renard Anglais" exposed the author to the reproach of paying servile court to the English; it would seem rather to have been the homage of a particular gratitude offered, and unquestionably due, to his friend and bene-

factress, Elizabeth Montague. In the well-known fable of "La Cigale et la Fourmi" originated an error, which, from edition to edition, has been perpetuated to the present day. The *cigale* having in one of the original woodcuts been erroneously represented as a grasshopper, the early translators so rendered the word in the English editions, and this rendering appears to have been adopted without protest in all the subsequent reproductions. The result has been to mislead many. No student, having before his eyes an unmistakable grasshopper, thinks it needful to look further for a satisfactory translation; consequently, the error becomes maintained in permanence, or until redressed in actual conversation with some French peasant who, with grasshoppers by thousands at his feet, "N'a jamais entendu parler d'une *cigale*." Instead of the "Ant and the Grasshopper," it should be the "Ant and the *Cicala*." The *cicala* is a winged insect, having nothing in common with the grasshopper; it lives chiefly amongst the foliage of the trees, and sings, or rather sounds, all summer through, precisely as the poet represents it in the fable. An analogous error may be traced to the erroneous French rendering of the title of Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield." The French are naturally puzzled to reconcile *vicair*, the term employed to render *vicar*, with the rank assigned in the novel to Dr. Primrose; whilst the English might be led to suppose that *vicair* and *vicar* were synonymous terms. Correctly rendered, the title would be, not "Le *Vicair*," but "Le *Curé* de Wakefield;" the word *vicar* being in French *curé*; and *vicair* being in English *curate*.

Nobody can thoroughly estimate his or her failure in life, because the greatest failures must always be totally unknown to the failing persons themselves. This may appear an unwarrantable saying, but I am persuaded the more you think about it, the more truth you will perceive in it. Not to have loved, or not to have been loved, is perhaps the greatest failure that can have happened to man or woman. Poverty, shame, and disgrace are nothing to it. Yet the person who has never loved, or who has never been loved, cannot realize what a loss he or she has had, and how the life has been a failure.

Now the foregoing has regard to external circumstances; for to love, or to be loved, requires another person.

But perhaps the aphorism may be more ade-

quately illustrated by something which concerns the character and nature of the failing person, himself or herself. For example, there is an unspeakable joy and delight in reverencing; but the person who has never had the felicity of paying reverence to any other being, does not know what he or she has lost. Again, the person, who has never had religious aspirations, cannot know what he or she has lost, in not having had that which is the supreme consolation in this world.

Numberless illustrations might be added to those which have been already given. And they would all tend to show that the greatest failures in any man's or woman's life are those of which he or she is totally unconscious.

Arthur Helps.

From Saint Pauls Magazine.
THE DOWAGER COUNTESS.

PART I.

It was very generally said of the Dowager Countess of Dangerfield that she was no longer the woman she had been. This did not mean simply that her youth and beauty had departed; because, as a matter of fact, her ladyship had not been at all good-looking for many a day. But of late her friends agreed that she was much "shaken,"—some preferring the term "broken." It was true enough, they conceded, that she was still erect as a grenadier, almost as tall, quite as fierce and formidable of presence; and, dressed in her favourite flame-coloured damask gown, its facings, robings, and white satin petticoat thickly embroidered with gold braid,—her head freshly curled and powdered and fully crowned with jewels, flowers, and feathers,—her eyebrows heavily blackened, and a thick coat of white and red paint screening her face and filling up the many crevices and creases in its surface,—she looked, altogether, much as she had looked any time during a score or more of years; but, so observers pronounced, she was manifestly changed nevertheless. Her voice,—still a bass organ of power and volume,—was less securely under her command than of old; less firm and prompt in its delivery, with an inclination to falter and flatten about certain of its notes. Her speech had lost much of the acrid vehemence which had once distinguished it. She had formerly indeed been noted for a peculiar savageness of sentiment, and for the exceeding strength of the language in which she had been wont to give this expression. To say simply that she swore would not adequately convey an idea of her special method of enunciation, because in the Countess's day ladies of quality were accustomed to season their conversation more or less abundantly with oaths. But she swore greatly in excess of the privileges of fashion,—as constantly and terribly, sooth to say, as "our army in Flanders" had lately been in the habit of swearing. Her diction was now found to be restrained within tolerably decorous limits, however, and her manner had become almost staid in comparison with the turbulence that had once characterized it. She had even been known,—not to smile certainly, but to relax for a moment the habitual rigour of her frown, and to ease her ordinarily severe rule over her facial muscles. The result had been somewhat grim and forbidding, considered in rela-

tion to amiability of aspect as it is generally understood, but yet had about it a certain quality that was of value if only because of its newness. Any variation in Lady Dangerfield's expression of countenance could hardly have been for the worse; and a look that was removed but a very little from the malign and the terrible, had in her case the preciousness as of startling novelty.

But this change in the Dowager Countess being clear, that it was rather the achievement of circumstances she had been unable to control, than the result of voluntary action of her own in the matter, was not less obvious. She had the air of one who had fought against alteration, and had ultimately been constrained to succumb to it. She was at times nervous and restless,—deficient in her old prompt presence of mind and steady self-command. She wore an abstracted, now and then, almost a scared, bewildered look. Much of this might perhaps fairly have been attributed to her advanced age; for she was not merely an old woman,—she was a very old woman. Yet people resolutely declined to accept that plausible explanation of the change in her ladyship. They seemed to regard her as quite impervious to the attacks of time. They maintained that she was as well as she had ever been; and certainly she had hardly known a day's illness in the whole course of her life. They derided the notion of her yielding to age, and, pointing to her gaunt frame and muscular and somewhat masculine proportions, demanded if she looked like a woman who was weakened under the weight of her years? Undoubtedly she did not look such a woman. Still, as the Rev. Mr. Bramston had then quite recently been singing—

"All sublunary things of death partake;
What alteration does a century make!
Kings and comedians all are mortal found,
Cæsar and Pinkethman are under ground,
What's not destroyed by Time's devouring hand?
Where's Troy, and where's the May-pole in the Strand?"

No one presumed to think, and probably no one felt so well disposed towards her as to hope, that Lady Dangerfield would prove more immortal than her neighbours.

How then was the change to be accounted for, and from when did it date? It was not easy to say. But close inspectors were frequently alleging that the Countess had never been herself, as they phrased it, since one fine evening when her chariot

had been stopped in Piccadilly, and she had been bidden by a masked and mounted highwayman to stand and deliver. She had, it was said, met the outrage with her constitutional fortitude,—had even offered some show of resistance: but the pressure of the cold muzzle of a horse-pistol upon her ladyship's hollow and rouged right cheek had convinced her of the imperative necessity of yielding to the malefactor's demand, and she had straightway abandoned to him her jewels, purse, and watch. Her grand-daughter, Lady Barbara Dangerfield, had sat beside her in the carriage, and had fainted incontinently upon the appearance of the robber. He had snatched from her the fashionable complication of velvet, lace, and flowers, called a "pompon," which she wore to decorate her head; but otherwise he had left the young lady unmolested, and had ridden off, it was stated, laughing aloud and displaying much levity of manner, before any attempt could be made to hinder his departure. Probably the show of alacrity on the part of passers-by in the way of arresting so daring a felon was of an inconsiderable kind,—until he was fairly out of sight, and danger from his pistols had entirely ceased. Then no doubt desire for his capture and anxiety to grapple with him were loudly expressed, and of a particularly urgent character.

Naturally this disaster had been a shock to the Dowager Countess. Not that the loss of property could have greatly grieved her; for her wealth was almost without bounds, and she could fairly have afforded, if that was the only question involved, to be plundered by footpads once a week, or even oftener. And indeed, in the instance under mention, her ladyship, as it happened, really incurred no loss; for on the morning after the robbery there was left at her mansion, in St. James's Square, a sealed packet containing every item of the valuables of which she had been dispossessed but a few hours previously. No explanation was given of the motives that had induced this strange proceeding. It was left for conjecture to determine as to whether sudden contrition had moved the thief to this seemingly step, or whether some unknown friend of her ladyship's, by a subtle course of action, had compelled restitution of the plunder. The thing was indeed mysterious and inexplicable. One article only was not restored; but that was of but trifling value. It was the "pompon" snatched by the highwayman from the head of the youthful Lady Barbara when she fainted.

The fact remained, however, that a lady of very exalted position had been subjected to grave indignity. But was this enough to account for the change the world had noted in the Dowager Countess? She had been credited with the possession of most manly intrepidity. It had been said of her that she feared simply nothing and no one. She came of the Brabazon family, long famed for the audacity, almost the ferocity, of its scions of either sex. It was not readily to be believed that a daughter of that truculent and combative house would be greatly moved, much less would be vitally altered, by the poor fact that the iron ring of a pistol-barrel had chilled for a moment her august countenance, even though the other end of the weapon had been grasped by the unscrupulous hand of a highwayman. The really great,—and who was really great if the Dowager Countess of Dangerfield was not?—were hardly to be permanently affected by such small matters. Besides, outrages of this kind, to the disgrace of the authorities, had become common at this time. A long series of disastrous campaigns had been followed by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle and a peace which, notwithstanding the fireworks and rejoicings and re-animation of trade it brought with it, many classes averred to be worse than a state of war; for the country was now flooded with disbanded soldiers and sailors, who from lack of occupation turned highwaymen and footpads in alarming numbers. Society had come to be afraid of stirring out after dark. So many persons of distinction had been robbed in the streets that a reward of one hundred pounds was offered in the "London Gazette" for the apprehension of any robber. Lady Albemarle, the sister of the Duke of Richmond, had been plundered of her watch and purse by nine assailants, at dusk, in so public a thoroughfare as Great Russell Street; and Mr. Horace Walpole, while sitting in his chariot in Hyde Park, had been attacked and robbed by highwaymen, narrowly escaping with his life,—a pistol-shot had even scarified his distinguished jaw-bone! It was quite certain that the Dowager Countess had suffered in very excellent company. Her case, however to be deplored, was by no means exceptional. Could it be regarded, then, as a satisfactory explanation of the change in her ladyship?

Let us record that in other respects there were signal peculiarities marking the period. Society is subject every now and then to a kind of nervous disorder or

hysterical seizure. The community reflects indeed, sometimes as in a magnifying mirror, the diagnostics of the individual.

Now we all know, without needing to fee a physician for the information, that there are many infirmities afflicting human nature which originate in, or are greatly attributable to, the follies and the errors of the sufferer. An irregular course of life, a persistent disregard of hygienic considerations, results in this or that form of malady. We make ourselves ill, in point of fact, of our own accord. We set down certain rows of figures under each other, and then are startled because when we come to add them up they amount to such and such a total. "You seek me," the doctor would tell us, if he could afford to be frank, "because you have tampered with your constitutions, trifled with your stomachs, impaired your digestions, upset your nervous systems. Patients, heal yourselves! Alter your lives and mend your ways!"

A century back from now,—more, a hundred and twenty years ago, let us say,—society had been behaving very dreadfully indeed. It had proceeded from excess to excess; it had carried on a protracted career of dissoluteness; its frailties and wantonness knew no bounds. It was in a state of fever; its nervous organization was morbidly exacerbated; its reason was menaced; and indeed it verged upon delirium. It was in so highly wrought a condition, while it was yet so enervated and exhausted, that it was ready to scream at the upholding of a finger, to swoon at the explosion of a cracker.

Moreover, while society was thus, as it were, open at every pore, and peculiarly receptive of the slightest influences, there was something strange in the air, "breathing contagion." There had been no winter; that is to say, no frost, no cold winds even. For eight months the weather had been unnaturally hot. Honeysuckles had flowered in December, and the nectarine trees were in bloom at Christmas. The world was at a loss to account for the curious clemency of the season. Mr. Walpole retreated to Strawberry Hill in February, "for air:" he could not breathe in town. People whispered to each other that Sir Isaac Newton had foretold a great change in the English climate as likely to occur about the middle of the eighteenth century, and had expressed a wish that he could live to see it. It was a pre-scientific epoch, so that there was no accounting for the weather by any allusions to the Gulf

Stream. "The pleasant Horace," as Miss Hannah More was by-and-by to designate him,—the good lady, of course, did not hear all Mr. Walpole said, and was without our opportunity of reading all he wrote,—was content with the fanciful explanation that "Jupiter had jogged the earth three degrees nearer to the sun." Meanwhile a troubled mob averred that there had appeared in the heavens "a bloody cloud,"—portentous of all kinds of dire catastrophes.—It was probably the Aurora Borealis, but there was a general disposition to consider it something more awfully phenomenal.—Then, early in the year, the country had been shaken by a storm unprecedented in point of violence, and attended by grave calamities. In the western counties, where it had chiefly raged, the prolonged tempest of wind, hail, and rain had overwhelmed the inhabitants with fear and consternation, and devastated property to an alarming extent. In the world of politics, the peace notwithstanding, a feeling of uneasiness was manifest, the more serious perhaps because of its vagueness and the absence of any palpable reason for it. A sort of undercurrent of alarm touching the designs of the Pretender was discernible, however: although the rising of '45 had been ruthlessly quelled, and the rebel lords had duly suffered on Tower Hill. Gossips rumoured that the Young Chevalier had even been seen in London. This could hardly have been true though, like a good many other falsehoods, it was perhaps only anticipatory of fact—for King James's grandson was certainly to be present in town a little later. Yet, in spite of all these agitating causes,—or, it may be, in part, because of them,—society continued to whirl in a desperate vortex of dissipation. Gambling had become an all-dominant mania. Gentlemen of fashion went hunting even with dice in their pockets, so that in the event of "a check," or the hounds not finding, they might "throw a main" by the covert side, to while away the time, and, so to say, keep the game alive. Nor were the gentler sex less absorbed by passion for play. They were even apt, now and then, to risk upon the turn of a card, or the cast of the die other matters, that should have been infinitely more valued by them than their money: as Hogarth's famous picture, "The Lady's Last Stake," with its portrait of Miss Salisbury, afterwards Mrs. Thrale and Mrs. Piozzi, so forcibly testifies. "The quality," male and female, in ecstasies swarms, filled *ridottos* and masquerades at

which the wildest license prevailed, and the strangest fashions in dress and undress found favour. It had almost become the vogue at these festal assemblies to reverse ordinary rules of attire — to mask the face and uncover the rest of the body. Flesh-coloured silk was in great demand, and abandonment of drapery was general. The satiric journals advertised on sale or hire, "naked dresses in imitation of the skin." In short, it had come to this: in order to rise to the height of fashion, it was only necessary to sink to the depths of impropriety.

No wonder Methodism began to lift up its voice, denouncing the iniquity of the period, while various prophets foretold the coming of much solemn trial and trouble upon the land by reason of its iniquity. But, as yet, the preachers and seers had wrought little amendment. The quality continued their desperate course, — apparently little distressed at their situation, — shattered somewhat in regard to nervous system, but scarcely meditating reform of a plenary kind as to mode of life.

It is probable that the change in the Dowager Countess of Dangerfield, which her friends had been so careful to note, was attributable rather to the general influences at work around her, taken in combination, than to any one of these considered separately and distinct from its fellow signs of the times. And the fact that she was not the woman she had been, although admitted, must not be strained to signify too much. It is to be understood that however "shaken," or even "broken," her ladyship still held her own in the realms of fashion: was ever to be seen in the van of the follies and dissipations of her time.

II.

THE Dowager Countess was holding high revel, giving a grand "rout" at her town mansion in St. James's Square. The night was turned into day. The neighbourhood was all a-glow with the quivering flames of links, the gleams of lanthorns, the mellow light of oil-lamps. A splendid crowd was gathering thither, choking the way. There was a wonderful tangle of vehicles; the hubbub was tremendous; the confusion seemed inextricable. Coachmen lashed and swore; link-boys yelled shrilly; horses' hoofs clanged and clattered; wheels rumbled and grated and locked; running footmen, bearing wax flambeaux, pushed and struggled to clear a path for their masters; chair-porters squabbled and fought. From afar could be heard the

thundering over the boulder-paved roadways of the approaching coaches, rich in crusted gilt decorations and finely coloured panels, yet swinging and rocking so terribly on their course that there seemed danger every moment of the drivers being hurled from the fringed and tasselled hamercloths, and of the occupants within being shaken to pieces by the exceeding violence of their transit. Sedans, in long lines, were to be seen advancing from all quarters, bounding elastically up and down as they came, with the practised half-running, half-walking gait of their porters, and centring in an inconvenient cluster at Lady Dangerfield's door. As the night advanced the endless stream of guests seemed to strengthen and thicken more and more.

There had been a grand dinner party at three o'clock in the afternoon; the fare of a substantial kind enough, — somewhat coarse, perhaps, from a modern point of view. But people of quality were then content to regale themselves with beef-steaks, rabbit and onions, collared pig, pickled salmon, venison pasty, apple pie, orange butter and Dutch cheese, washed down with strong ale, punch, and usquebaugh: the feast being crowned with choicer liquors, such as tokay, champagne, burgundy, and Florence wine. It was hardly surprising that upon many of the faces of the Countess's guests there was perceptible a roseate flush of overfeeding, that rendered rouge quite a superfluous adornment. Nevertheless, fucus, in thick coats, had been plastered upon the cheeks of most of the company present.

The entrance-hall and staircase were lined with flowers and shrubs, and lighted with coloured lamps. It was quite "a baby-Vauxhall," every one declared. In the centre of the vestibule leading to the grand withdrawing-room stood large alabaster vases, with wax candles burning within, — "a mighty pretty effect," it was universally agreed. The spacious saloons were hung with Indian painted taffeta; stacks of valuable china, ranged on Japan cabinets, filled the corners of the rooms. Central chandeliers of bronze and cut-glass were suspended from the painted ceilings, and convex mirrors on the walls reflected and multiplied the light of the candles in the scones. Still, it must be admitted, the general scheme of illuminations was not of a very ample kind. In those days, gas, and argand, and sun-burners, and moderator lamps, and other corresponding contrivances were not; and people perforce were content, even on the grandest occa-

sions, with a dimness and gloom that would now be deemed very intolerable indeed. But if the background was somewhat lustreless, the foreground figures were sufficiently splendid. Sumptuousness of apparel was the vogue. The crow rules our modern method of costume; but the peacock then prevailed. And Lady Dangerfield's guests were as radiant and magnificent as white and scarlet paint, diamonds, feathers, lace, gold and silver embroidery, velvets, silks, and satins, and all the hues of the rainbow, could make them.

"Gracious powers, was there ever such a crush!" exclaimed one lady of quality to another. "My new silk sack has been nearly torn from my shoulders, and my lace is all tatters. These dreadful hoops!"

"They're the mode, my dear, and one may as well be in one's coffin as out of the fashion. We're all like blown bladders to-day; next month I don't doubt we shall all be stalking about as thin as thread papers."

For the moment square or oblong hoops were the only wear, and the caricaturists of the period, — who had their hands very full of subjects, — ventured to compare the ladies who followed the fashion to donkeys bearing panniers. Indeed, the wicker protuberances which women then wore on either side were of amazing size, and fully deserved the scoffs and censures of the satirists. The men also delighted in amplitude of dress, and the skirts of their coats were lined with buckram or stiffened with whalebone, so as to project from the figure in graceless lines enough. By way of curious contrast to this fashion, very small wigs, fitting closely to the head, were the mode, and the ladies' caps were of flat form, and extremely diminutive size. The fashionable hair-powder was of a bluish-grey colour.

"It's a mercy I'm here alive," quoth Lady Betty Laxford, laughing and panting. She was a florid, exuberant beauty of the Bacchante type, lavish in display of neck. "My louts of chairmen turned me topsy-turvy, and I 'saw London,' as the children say when you hold them head downwards. I thought I should never come right again, I was so bundled up in my coats, and frightened out of my senses with the crash of broken glass. People couldn't even see how I was blushing, and I hardly know now whether I'm on my head or my heels. I really thought the end of the world was come. The oddest feeling, my dear! I screamed and laughed and cried and fainted, all at once. That is, I should have fainted, only I felt I was in a frightful

pickle, and I didn't know who might be looking at me. It's no good fainting when your hoops are over your head, you know, I boxed one rude fellow's ears for laughing, and then I gained the door, with the loss of my fan and half my ribbons. Where's the dear Countess? What a world of company! And where are the card-tables? What would I give for a glass of negus, or a taste of ratifia!"

Her ladyship gathered together her tumbled train of rose-coloured paduasoy, embroidered with festoons of vine-leaves and corn-flowers, and pushed her way through the thronged rooms.

"'Odslife! what a crowd," she said. "I shall be stripped of my clothes, and go home like a naked creature, I'm sure I shall. Plague on the men, how they keep pegging down one's sack with their ugly heels! I'd better have come dressed like Mother Eve at first. Harry Brabazon, you good soul, give me an arm and take me to a safe corner."

"I had the pleasure of seeing your ladyship at the door, and the pain of being unable to render any assistance. I was so hemmed in by the crowd. I trust your ladyship was not hurt?"

"Is my ladyship a pancake, that I'm to be turned over like that and not hurt, sir? You were looking on, were you? You're a wretch to tell me of it! You couldn't help me for grinning, I'll be bound. And you're laughing at me now in your sleeve, you know you are. As I'm a person, I shall never give over blushing for this night's mishap!"

The gentleman addressed as Harry Brabazon wore the uniform, — scarlet, with blue facings corded with gold, — of a captain in the King's Guards. He carried under his arm a large military cocked hat called a Kevenhuller, edged with gold lace, and decorated with the black Hanoverian cockade. He was of elegant figure and bearing, with a handsome face, — "a black man," as complexions were then accounted, the meaning being, not that he was a negro, but that his skin was of a dark hue, — a trifle worn, perhaps, by late hours and loose living: for he followed the reckless fashions of his time. A younger son, related to the family of the Dowager Countess of Dangerfield, he was said to have in great part exhausted his small patrimony at the hazard-table. At the same time he was reputed to be a gallant officer, and to have served with distinction under his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, and other commanders.

"I won't detain you longer, Captain,"

Lady Betty said presently. "I'm better now. I've got my breath again,—almost. And I know you're mad to be off dancing with that pretty Bab Dangerfield."

"Can Lady Betty imagine —"

"Yes. Lady Betty knows all about it. I've been turned up like an hour-glass, but things are shaking gradually into their right places again, and I'm not so giddy as you think me, perhaps. You're playing a dangerous game, Captain Brabazon. You think you can carry off Bab from under the very eyes of that she-dragon of an old countess. You'll find it none so easy, let me tell you. I wouldn't mind helping you if I could, and if I dared. Bless the man, how his great black eyes gleam at me! Only gratitude, I suppose, though it looks for all the world like love. Let go my hand, Harry. She's too good for you, sir. You've modesty enough to know that, I suppose, if you've any modesty at all. I don't believe men even know what the word means. We're all too good for you, that's the fact. And Bab's the sweetest, dearest, little body living. To think of her being handed over to the tender mercies of a great swaggering captain of the guards! Much worse couldn't happen to her if the town were to be taken and sacked by the Pretender and the French. There, go! I'll find my way to the card-room by myself. One last word, — 'Ware the Countess!'"

"She hates me, I know."

"Why shouldn't she? Ain't you her relation? Do you expect her to love you? Do you think you're the sort of creature to be loved by her, — or by any one?"

"Well, I don't know, Lady Betty; a man can but try his luck, you see."

"Luck, indeed! Do you think love's a mere gambling matter?"

"Well, — one stakes one's heart, you know. Can one venture more? I would if I could, — if I'd anything more or better to venture."

"Your heart! Are you sure you've got such a thing about you? A mere lump of pumice-stone, that can feel nothing and hold nothing. And you think yourself worthy of Bab Dangerfield!"

"I never said that, Lady Betty. One may love, I suppose, and yet be unworthy to possess that one loves. My hopes have hardly dared mount so high yet. I dare say I'm all you say I am, Lady Betty. Yet if I can win my cousin Bab, be sure I will. For deserving her, that's quite another matter. But I'm fond of my own way, — and I've a knack of getting it, at odd times; and I've a pretty stout arm —"

"None of your desperado airs with me, sir. You can break a lamp, bully a constable, or bam a justice with any blood in the liberties of Westminster, I don't doubt. But do you think you can clear a path to a woman's heart by means of ever so stout an arm? Is a girl of spirit to yield to mere brute force? Do you take Bab for one of those wretched Scotch folks you cut the throats of after Culloden? Don't scowl so, Harry. You don't know how it tempts one to tease you. I like you, — there. Can I say anything prettier than that? And, — I'll get the old Countess down to cards presently. Will that do? I really believe I'm an angel by rights, — only somehow my wings got shaken off when my chair upset, and left me mortal after all."

III.

YOUTHFUL little Lady Barbara Dangerfield, in her white damask gown, a blush-rose in her tucker, and a black velvet ribbon secured by a diamond buckle round her pearly, slender neck, certainly looked a very pretty, dainty creature indeed. Mr. Reynolds would have taken real delight in limning her ladyship's sweet face, and would have done as much in his very best manner at the moderate charge of some twelve guineas or so; for, at the time of which we are writing, England's greatest painter was little known or prized by the London world of fashion. Lady Barbara had large, steady, deep blue eyes, coral-red lips of most perfect form, and a pleasant, unconscious sauciness about the trim outline of her nose and chin. Her auburn hair fell in profuse coils upon her satin shoulders, though its golden-russet glories of hue were cruelly masked by the pomatum and powder with which it was caked. Her tightly-laced, unyielding, cylindrical corset hindered somewhat the free movement of her lithe figure, cramping too its undulating graces of contour. Yet youth and beauty and natural charm fought a good fight against the restrictions and compulsions of fashion in attire, and, upon the whole, held their own very thoroughly. Her animation fairly kindled by the excitement of her first ball, her glances lit up and her cheeks flushed by the witcheries of the music and the dance, she was, if not the most striking or commanding, without doubt the prettiest woman beneath her grandmamma's roof on the night of the grand rout.

"I'm not to dance with you, Harry. I'm not to speak to you," said Lady Bar-

bara, with a frightened look, as Captain Brabazon approached her.

"I know I'm a dreadful ogre," said the Captain. "Yet you don't think so very ill of me, do you, Bab?"

"Indeed not, — but my grandmother —"

"My great aunt hates me like the, — well, like poison. I don't suppose she does hate the other person I was going to mention so very much after all. Yet I must speak to thee, Bab."

"Indeed Harry —"

"The Countess has only forbidden your speaking to me. She can't help my speaking to you, can she? You need not answer, you know, Bab, unless you like; and then you can do it with your eyes. That won't be disobeying orders, will it, Bab? You're not forbidden to look at me, are you? And your looks say more than the tongues of all the rest of the people in the room put together, to my thinking, and talk a prettier language, — not that that's saying so much after all."

"You know, Harry, that it is not my wish that we should be other than friends."

"We are friends, Bab, and we will be friends, — that at least, though all the grandmothers in the world say us nay. How pretty you look, my child, to night! Quite good to eat, I protest. But that is an ogre's speech." And the Captain laughs, showing his white teeth, and looking a very happy, and fond and good-natured sort of ogre.

"You'll dance a minuet with me?" he asked.

"I should like to," says Bab simply, "but I dare not."

"Presently, I mean. When her ladyship's at cards. She'll forget everything, even you, Bab, when she's fairly snared by the red and black pips. May she hold every king in the pack! She's never tired of playing while the luck's on her side. But that's a common case."

"I shall be seen talking to you, — and how I shall be scolded!" Bab's childish air of distress, as she glanced timorously about her, was very charming.

"Step into the balcony, — there's no one looking."

They entered a sort of artificial bower, veiled with gauze curtains, and lined with shrubs and flowers, and dimly lit with small lamps in coloured glasses.

"The ball-room was terribly hot," said Bab presently, reconciling herself to what she knew would be judged as highly improper and disobedient by the Dowager

Countess. "I vow it's quite cool and pleasant here. What's that? Lightning?" She gave a little scream.

"Don't be frightened, Bab. It won't hurt you. What could hurt you? Sweet, good little soul that you are."

"Will there be a storm, do you think, Harry?"

"Very likely. It's been strangely hot and heavy all day long."

"I'm a dreadful coward when there's a storm, — especially when I'm alone."

"Then I promise you I won't leave your side for a single moment until it's all over." The Captain spoke with the air of being perfectly unselfish in the matter.

"How kind you are to me, cousin."

"I can't be kind enough, Bab; that's my great grievance. I can't show you, and I can't tell you, how dear you are to me, — how much I love thee."

"Hush, Harry. I mustn't listen to you. You shouldn't say such things to me."

"Why not, Bab? Because you —" The Captain's voice faltered, and he stopped.

"No," says Lady Barbara innocently; "because my grandmother —"

"Bless you, Bab." And the officer kissed his young relative. As he had previously stated there was no one looking.

"Was that what you had to say to me?" inquires Bab, with shy roguishness.

"I had a world of things to say to you, Bab. It's putting them very shortly when I say 'I love thee.' Yet that's the sum of them perhaps, when they come to be added up. I love thee, Bab. And you? I feel very obstinate. I've a great mind to say you shall love me whether you will or not. But that would be rude, perhaps."

"I think I should like to have a little will of my own left me, — just the least bit in the world, please, Harry. It won't make so very much difference, after all, perhaps." And she let her hand slide into his. Presently she started. "Was that thunder?"

The balcony looked on to St. James's Square. Above the glow of the many links and lanterns could be seen a sulphurous and lurid sky, and over the hubbub and jangling of the horses and carriages and their attendants, could be heard the sullen roar of thunder.

"The storm's coming on. Fear nothing, Bab. Here's my amulet against danger." Captain Brabazon took from his breast a crumpled little coil of ribbon and finery.

"My pompon!" She uttered a little scream. "The one the robber stole!"

"I had thought of restoring it, but, upon reflection, I mean to keep it. May I?"

"But how did it come into your hands, Harry?"

"You didn't recognize the Piccadilly highwayman, then?"

"What!—you were the highwayman?"

"To think that a crape vizard and a horse-pistol should make such a difference! You didn't know me, Bab? I had grown to be such a giant in size, and my aspect had turned so suddenly ferocious? It was the magic of your fears that had changed me; for all I looked so dreadful, I was still but Harry Brabazon,—your fond, foolish cousin masquerading as a knight of the road. How frightened you were; I felt sorry then, for indeed I love thee too dearly to harm a hair of thy head, or cause thee a moment's pang. And yet how pretty you looked when you fainted! I longed to wake thee back to life again by my kisses. A mad prank, wasn't it? But I was mad that day. You'd been so harsh with me at Lady Careless's overnight, that I had thought to drown my cares in Burgundy, and faith I think I fairly drowned my senses too. Yet 'twas your fault, Bab, when all's said. See what comes of being cruel."

"Indeed, cousin, I meant not to be cruel. But I was so wretched. I had been so scolded,—I felt so weak I couldn't pluck up spirit to be wilful."

"You obeyed the Countess's orders implicitly I know. You'd scarcely give me a word or a look, much less the flower I asked you for, that you wore in your bosom. You let it fade, and threw it away, rather than give it to me. So I was bent on vengeance. I took the pompon, and I've worn it here ever since."

"Oh, Harry, how can you be so desperate and wicked?"

"Nay, Bab, have you stolen nothing? What say you to my ease and quiet? Where is the little thief that has filched my heart from my very breast? I could have borne with fewer sighs and less uneasiness the loss of all the wealth in the world. Was Love the bandit? Nay, the rogue professes to be blindfold, and so wears something of a highwayman's mask over his face. Or was Bab the depredator? Or are Bab and Love all one? 'Ods life, I think so. I'm not worthy of thee, pretty one. I know it. I'm but a poor soldier,—poorer in that I've led something of a fool's life hitherto. But then I had not the motive for wise conduct, my love for thee now gives me, Bab. You shall make me wise and good hence-

forth, my cousin; for indeed, who could linger near thee but for a moment and not be bettered by the purity and sweetness that spring from thee as the perfume from a flower."

"Dear Harry, I love thee; and, so far as I may—"

"I know, I know,—the Countess is our stumbling-block. But never fear, I'll make thee mine, heaven willing, in spite of her. She is but mortal, after all. I frightened her rarely t'other day with my horse-pistol. I could scarce hold it steady for laughing. But I owed her something for her bad treatment of me,—of both of us,—for the tales she's told you of me. She never was so scared in her life. Not but she's brave enough. She'd have shot or stabbed me if she'd had a weapon handy. How she growled and ground her teeth and swore under her breath! Yet she shivered, too, and turned pale, in spite of her paint. I punished her, not a doubt of it."

"She'll never forgive you, Harry."

"Then I must e'en make shift to do without her ladyship's forgiveness."

There came another peal of thunder. Lady Bab screamed,—not only because of the thunder, however. There was another, and, for the moment, even a more potent reason for terror. The Dowager Countess stood beside the young couple in the balcony, with so sinister and malevolent an expression upon her wrinkled, rouged visage that she seemed to be quite the kind of personage whose appearance might reasonably be expected to be attended by thunder and lightning and other appropriate and redoubtable accompaniments.

"What do you here, child?" she demanded, in angry, grating tones, scanning her granddaughter with fierce eyes. "Go to the ball-room instantly. My Lord Bel-lasis has been seeking you everywhere. He would honour you with his hand in a minute. Go!"

Lady Barbara fled like a scared hare. She dared not even turn to bestow a parting glance upon her lover.

IV.

"You here?" The Dowager Countess turned wrathfully upon Captain Brabazon.

"I had the honour of receiving your ladyship's card."

"I thought you were in gaol."

"In gaol?" repeated the Captain, with surprise in his voice.

"Oh, I only mean for debt. No doubt you've been cunning enough to keep

clear of graver offences—as yet. For all you know the hemp may be grown and spun for your proper neckcloth, nevertheless. You'd have worn it long since, if deserving had anything to do with it."

"I know that I have not had the good fortune to win your ladyship's favourable opinion."

"You know that you're a villain!"

"I have never learned to set great store upon myself, madam. For hard words I care little,—nor, for that matter, for hard blows either. Your ladyship is, of course, at liberty to style me villain, if it so please you,—or, indeed, to bestow upon me any other opprobrious and insulting epithet. I promise to be not greatly stirred in any case. I hold myself to be simply a soldier, who has fought and bled,—I would say it with all modesty,—for his king and country. As to my honour, I maintain it to be unblemished, and I shall be glad to meet the man who presumes to have a contrary opinion."

"Are you not a gambler? Do you not haunt that pit of destruction, White's?"

"Sits the wind in that quarter? I have played; I own it. I have lost, and paid my losses. Who dares say otherwise? I did wrong, it may be,—nay, I will avow it. Still, I have but followed the mode. Why should I, then, be singled out for blame from among all the Countess of Dangerfield's guests?"

"Profligate! do you know whither you are hurrying?"

"I see your ladyship has taken up with the Methodist's vocation." The Captain laughed bluntly. "I don't doubt your ladyship will become the conventicle purely. When may we expect, dare I ask, that diamond necklace to be changed for the preacher's bands?"

"Scoffer!"

"Yet I think I have seen your ladyship handle the cards deftly enough. At odd times, too, I fancy your ladyship has even brandished the dice-box, and thrown a main with the best,—I should say the worst of us. Faith, now I remember, it was my grand-aunt, the Countess of Dangerfield, who, when I was a child, first taught me to know one card from another. My first game of cribbage was played in your ladyship's lap. I wasn't tall enough to reach to the table."

With an angry movement of her head, the Countess seemed to toss the topic away from her.

"I know what you would do, sirrah. You would repair your shattered state with my grandchild's fortune."

"It's a—pardon me!" The Captain checked himself in an angry outburst. "Your ladyship is mistaken. You do me grave injustice. If your ladyship has any friend wearing a sword, and willing to repeat such a charge against me, I shall know better how to deal with him. I shall reply to him with less forbearance than I am bound to exhibit towards your ladyship, I warrant you."

"How, sirrah? Do you not persist in following the child like her shadow? Have you not persecuted her with your odious attentions?"

"I love my cousin, madam; I own it frankly. Why should I not love her? Who will hinder me? How, indeed, can I help loving her? For her fortune, it is nothing to me. I ask not for it. I want it not,—nay, it is hateful to me rather, in that it seems in some sort to bar my winning her,—and that, to the evil thinking, it taints with a suspicion of self-seeking a passion, heaven knows, to be absolutely pure and truthful."

The Countess laughed acridly. "Spare your play-house speeches, sir," she said. "Such tinsel blandishments may beguile milkmaids and silly chits of seventeen; but, indeed, I know their trumpery nature too well. I'm an old woman, and I've been behind the scenes too often. Lady Barbara is not for you, nor such as you. I forbid your speaking to her again."

"I am her kinsman, madam."

"Fiddlestick! While she is under my roof you shall not approach her. You her suitor, her husband! It shall not be, I say."

"Pardon me. I say it shall." The Captain bowed with an air of severe politeness. The Dowager Countess drew herself up, and addressed him with much majesty.

"Captain Brabazon,—nephew, if you prefer it,—for I will suppose you to be my nephew,—your mother always said you were, and more, persuaded your father to believe as much,—some men are so credulous!—you'll not darken my door again. I'll have your black face no more in my house. It was through a blunder of my groom of the chambers that you received a card for this night. The blockhead shall be dismissed for his stupidity. And harkee, sir; we're strangers henceforth, remember. My granddaughter is not for you,—nor her money, nor is mine,—not even to the fee-simple of a rope and a shilling. So abandon, pray, all foolish expectations in that regard. Don't dare to send to me, sir, for aid, in whatever straits you

may be in,—unless, indeed, you're condemned to ride backward up Holborn Hill. In such case I should like to secure a window with a good view of Tyburn Tree. Good night. My servants shall show you the way out, and quickly too, if you have difficulty in finding the door."

The look of the Dowager Countess was particularly venomous as she delivered herself of this bitter speech. The Captain replied with considerable calmness:—

"If I should be the first Brabazon to suffer at the hands of Mr. Ketch, madam, I shall not, possibly, be the first of the family who has merited helping from the world by that unpleasant functionary. For my mother,—of whom your ladyship has spoken with so tender a grace,—I am happy to think that she is now where she is little likely to be hurt by your taunts, or incommoded by your presence. I refer to heaven, madam. Your ladyship needs to be informed, perhaps, that there is such a place. For my own doom, whatever it may be,—the three-legged tree at Tyburn, if your ladyship will have it so,—I don't doubt that fortitude will be duly given me to endure it as a man should. May your ladyship be not less prepared when your own time arrives."

"What do you mean, sirrah! how dare you?" the Countess began in a quavering angry voice.

"I mean good-night and good-bye. I will not further trespass upon your ladyship's hospitality. The sight of my black face shall no longer disturb your vision. Only this I would say;—I love my cousin Barbara, and I mean to win her. I am your ladyship's most obedient humble servant."

For some minutes the countess stood leaning against the balcony, as though musing in an abstracted way over the words that had been addressed to her. Presently she was startled by the flashing of the lightning; with a shiver, she pinched her hoop beneath her elbows, and hurriedly re-entered the ball-room.

The Captain, with a flushed face and a somewhat fiery gleam in his eyes, had bowed low, and quitted her. But he did not withdraw from the house immediately. He lingered for some time on the staircase and in the vestibule, in the hope of a parting word with Lady Barbara, or even of one more glimpse of his charming cousin. In this respect he was not destined to be gratified. He encountered the young lady no more on that evening. As he turned from St. James's Square, he found the storm without approaching its height. The

heat was intense. The lightning flashed, and the thunder rolled and crackled overhead with amazing violence.

"I bet you it isn't thunder; I'll give you odds," said a languid coxcomb in a suit of blue and silver, lounging on the staircase. "I'll bet you it's the powder-mills at Hounslow exploding. Powder-mills always exploding at Hounslow. Or I'll take you, if you like. Will any one bet?"

"For shame," exclaimed an alarmed gentleman in clerical garb, hurrying from the rout; "gambling at such a moment! I do believe there are men, who, if they were to hear the last trump, would give odds that it was only the bugle-call of the Life Guards. What times we live in! No wonder the heavens roar!"

"No, I won't bet. It can't be powder-mills. Or they must be nearer town than Hounslow." And the gentleman in blue and silver paled somewhat, and tapped his jewelled snuff-box with trembling fingers. The lightning without was now so incessant and so intensely vivid, that the candles in the ball-room seemed to burn but dully and dimly; their flames flickered and smoked; a hazy dun red hue pervaded the chamber, by contrast with the blue-white sheet of fire that was blazing in the sky. Another roar of thunder, and a panic seized the Countess's guests. They felt, or thought they felt, the house over their heads shaken to its foundations. The window-panes rattled and were shivered to pieces; the curtains swayed, and belled out like the canvas of a ship in full sail; doors banged violently, and in all parts of the house bells were set ringing; the ground rocked and trembled; the chandeliers swung from the ceilings to and fro like pendulums; a large mirror over the chimney-piece suddenly cracked all over, with a noise like the explosion of a musket; the stores of precious china ornaments were flung from their shelves, and shattered on the floor. Hysterical screams of terror were heard; there was wild hurrying hither and thither; women swooned, and men swore; a few fell on their knees in prayer. The musicians abandoned their instruments, and rushed from the room. Then arose on the part of all present a frantic desire to quit the scene of festivity as soon as might be. A surging, frightened, shrieking crowd, choked the passages and staircases, and streamed into the open street. Torrents of rain were falling, and still overhead the lightning, in great pulsations, was stirring and sundering the skies, and the thunder sounding and reverberating on all sides with frightful violence.

But no matter for soaked finery, mired velvets, and draggled silks. It was held best and safest to be out of doors. The splendid mansion of the Dowager Countess was declared doomed. An agonized consternation blanched every face. One cry was on every lip:—"THE EARTHQUAKE!"

The card-tables were overturned by the awe-stricken players, in their precipitate anxiety to abandon their game, and make good their escape. Cards and counters, money and candles, strewn the carpets. The world of fashion had never known such a night of horror. Society was shaken to its very centre. The quality seemed smitten with frenzy and paralysis, at one blow.

People were heard declaring that one particular flash of lightning had turned all the clubs and spades in the pack, bright red; and all the hearts and diamonds deep black. This was at the pharo-table. "Thank heaven, I never play pharo, but always brag or cribbage," gasped a lady of quality: "so the storm was not pointed at me. But I don't think I'll ever touch a card again. Ah!" Screaming, she covered her eyes with her hands, to shut out the blinding glare of the lightning, as she tottered to the door.

The Dowager Countess lay stretched on the floor of her grand with-drawing room. She had swooned. Lady Barbara, trembling terribly, bent over her, bathing her temples with vinegar.

Every now and then, with twitching face, and glassy eyes, and chattering teeth, the Countess moaned, "The earthquake! The second shock! Beware of the third!" Over and over again. "The earthquake! The second shock! Beware of the third!" The Dowager Countess was changed indeed. There could be no further question on that head now.

It was an awful night certainly. But one person seemed wholly undisturbed by its fell terrors and calamities. After all, what is even an earthquake to a lover? The very heavens may fall, so his passion but prosper.

Captain Brabazon, tripping lightly along to his lodgings in Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, had heart to sing, and to make his voice

heard above the turbulent accompaniment which the full orchestra of the elements was now so abundantly affording him,—

"Tell me, Chloe, tell me pray,
How long must Damon sue?
But fix the time and I'll obey,
With patience wait the happy day
That makes me sure of you."

His song went something after that fashion.

Anon from verse, he would drop to prose, still of a rapt and exalted sort.

"Love her? dearest Bab!" he exclaimed; "of course I love her. Is she not made to be loved? Could one love a dearer, purer, kinder little soul? Does not sweetness lodge in her lips, beauty in her cheeks, wit in her forehead, and fondness in her eyes? Am I to love her the less because I may fail to win her? Is my heart to change towards her because fate may forbid her to be mine? No! 'Come what come may,' as the fellow cries at the play-house, I'll love her forever, and make her my own some day,—if I can. I don't quite see how to set about it, I own. But some chance will favour me. Loving her, as I know I do; loving me, as I think she does; have I not reason to be happy now, and to hope for greater happiness in the future?" He argued himself into a very comfortable state of mind in this respect. Presently he felt a little less at ease, however, as he scowled, and muttered with clenched teeth, "But then, her grandmother!" and thereupon he gave expression to much vehement vituperation in regard to the nature and disposition of his noble kinswoman, the Dowager Countess of Dangerfield.

"One thing, however, I know," he added presently. "She is but mortal, and she's to be frightened!"

The Captain was thinking merely of his adventure as a highwayman in Piccadilly. Lady Dangerfield had been alarmed on that occasion, no doubt. How much more terrified she had been when the earthquake dispersed her guests, Captain Brabazon was not yet fully informed.

It astonishes thoughtless people to find that some of the wisest men in talking and writing, commit some of the greatest errors in action. These thoughtless people forget that it is an immense advantage for a man in talk or writing

to have himself always before his mind as a person who has, in action, committed the greatest follies. Montaigne says: "There are as ridiculous stories to be told about me, as about any man in the world."

Arthur Helps.

From The Saturday Review.
POPPING THE QUESTION ON THE STAGE.

THERE is a question which is assumed by ingenuous youth to be so universal that, in fact, one-half of the human race is supposed to ask it of the other half. The boy who contemplates his future at all takes for granted that he will some day ask some woman to marry him, and all girls suppose the time will come when they must answer Yes or No. The question, then, being at once inevitable and of so momentous a nature, and so much more-over hanging on the way of putting it, and the whole subject, too, being shrouded in mystery—for, to the eternal honour of the sex who are questioned, a cloud rests on the manner and method of their questioners, and a delicate reticence forbids the illumination which experience might throw on this point—it is no wonder that youth especially should find the subject interesting, even when treated by fancy and in the abstract; and should welcome that reading or dramatic representation through which alone can be derived hints, and the more definite and masterly instruction of example, as to the mode in which the ordeal should be gone through when the critical moment in their own personal history arrives. Nor does this natural spirit of inquiry miss its satisfaction. Fiction indeed has made it at once a duty and a delight to put young persons of either sex in the way of acquitting themselves with credit in what is conventionally assumed to be the most difficult, embarrassing, and even crucial moment of existence; suggesting infinite alternatives, and adapting itself to every humour, so that no one need be driven, for want of example or precedent, to play a part for which nature has not fitted him.

Considering how the drama undertakes to enact before men's eyes every supreme moment incident to humanity, the art of making proposals ought by this time to be easy, and a study of genteel comedy ought to precede every declaration; but in fact, and with one exception, it is not to the drama that the lover anxious to acquit himself with distinction should turn. Tragedy rarely deals in such amenities, and its precedents are full of ill omen; while comedy will only treat the affair as a joke. There is unfortunately an element of the ludicrous everywhere haunting this subject, rendering all direct representation hazardous. Playwrights shirk it for their dignified lovers, and actors mistrust their powers of subduing the spectator to any gravity of sympathy. A proposal involv-

ing the graceful emotions befitting the occasion is still a thing for the imagination to picture, not for more flippant eye and ear to witness. Therefore it belongs rather to the novel than even to the domestic drama. There is plenty of love-making on the stage, but the proposal either precedes the action—as when Millamant is all the way through considering whether she shall accept Mirabell or not, and triumphing in her power; "I think I must resolve after all not to have you; well, I won't have you, Mirabell—I'm resolved—I think you may go. Ha, ha, ha! what would you give that you could help loving me!"—or, like murder, it comes off behind the scenes; or it is arranged, as the newspapers say, by the lady's papa. Thus Boniface offers his daughter and her two thousand pounds to Gibbet. "And what think you, then, of my daughter Cherry for a wife?"—the highwayman, as great a master of policy and of his feelings as his august betters in such contracts, replying, "Look'ee, my dear Bonny; Cherry is the goddess I adore; but it is a maxim that man and wife should never have it in their power to hang one another, for, if they should, heaven have mercy on them both."

But such neatness and readiness, such perception of the situation, as is here displayed, is no part of the conventional stage-proposal. It is the booby, the country bumpkin, the fop, the blunderer who makes his offer on the boards. Everybody is familiar with Lord Dundreary's offer, and his philosophical preparation for either fortune. The past century was equally well acquainted with Wilful's method of recommending himself:—"A match or no match, cousin with the hard name. If you have a mind to be married, say the word and send for the piper. Say the word and I'll do't; Wilful will do't; that's my crest":—and also with Steele's Humphrey Gubbins' notion of making himself agreeable to his cousin Bridget, or Parthenissa, as she prefers to call herself, keeping her Christian name as the greatest secret she has—"Look ye, cousin, the old folks resolving to marry us, I thought it would be proper to see how I liked you, as not caring to marry a pig in a poke." Goldsmith, too, is ingenious in predicaments founded on the tyranny of parents in the disposing of their children. Thus Leon-tine, in the *Good-Natured Man*, having brought home as his sister (who had been away with her aunt this ten years) the lady he is engaged to, is required by his father to make love to his ward, Miss Rich-

land, who loses half her fortune if she marries without her guardian's consent, which of course she intends to do. She gets an inkling of the situation the moment before her reluctant lover arrives to pay his court, and resolves upon the most implicit acquiescence. First he stammers, blunders, and throws all upon his father. "My father, madam, has some intentions — of explaining an affair — which — himself — can best explain." In vain is he urged on by old Croaker with "Call up a look, you dog." He flounders into a dead silence, which the senior hastens to attribute to the violence of his passion. Miss Richland finds a great attraction in modest diffidence — "A silent address is the genuine eloquence of sincerity." "Madam," says the father, "he has forgot to speak any other language — silence is become his mother-tongue." "And it must be confessed, sir," the lady blandly replies, "it speaks very powerfully in his favour." Leontine, finding his modesty so attractive, now tries what impudence will do, and loudly expresses his adoration: —

MISS RICHLAND. — If I could flatter myself you thought as you speak, sir.

LEONTINE. — Doubt my sincerity, madam! By your dear self I swear. Ask the brave if they desire glory; ask cowards if they covet safety —

CROAKER. — Well, well, no more questions about it.

LEONTINE. — Ask the sick if they long for health; ask misers if they love money — ask —

CROAKER. — Ask a fool if he can talk nonsense! What's come over the boy? What signifies asking when there is not a soul to give you an answer? If you would ask to the purpose, ask this lady's consent to make you happy.

MISS RICHLAND. — Why, indeed, sir, his uncommon ardour almost compels me — forces me to comply.

The young widow has a peculiar place in the drama, especially in the French and what is borrowed from the French, because for her alone is it *comme il faut* to receive addresses direct; she alone is absolutely at her own disposal. But all love-making to widows on the stage is supposed to be directed to her purse. The lady is the dupe, and the audience the confidant, of a succession of mercenary suitors. But a certain formula of proposal has been always considered indispensable, even where parents manage everything, and this form affords an opportunity for comedy not to be passed by. Take the public offer of his hand made by M. Thomas Diafoirus, who comes upon the scene charged with a fine speech for everybody concerned. He first

mistakes his intended, to whom he is introduced for the first time, for her step-mother, and commences: — "Madame, c'est avec justice que le ciel vous a concédé le nom de belle-mère"; but being set right in this particular by his father, no way abashed by the *contretemps*, he addresses himself at once to the delivery of an offer of his heart and hand. We know people likely enough to recommend themselves in something the same strain, but, if so, the ladies say nothing about it: —

Mademoiselle, ne plus ne moins que la statue de Memnon rendoit un son harmonieux lorsqu'elle venoit à être éclairée des rayons du soleil, tout de même me sens-je animé d'un doux transport à l'apparition du soleil de vos beautés. Et comme les naturalistes remarquent que la fleur nommée Héliotrope tourne sans cesse vers cet astre du jour, aussi mon cœur d'ores-en-avant tournera-t-il toujours vers les astres resplendissants de vos yeux adorables, ainsi que vers son pôle unique. Souffrez-donc, mademoiselle, que j'appende aujourd'hui à l'autel de vos charmes l'offrande de ce cœur, qui ne respire, et n'ambitionne autre gloire que d'être toute sa vie, mademoiselle, votre très-humble, très-obéissant, et très-fidèle serviteur et mari.

The audience is quite ready to agree with Toinette that learning puts one in the way of saying very fine things.

We have said that the technical declaration is shirked by the dramatist, with one exception. We need hardly say that the exception is Shakspeare. We might almost say that Shakspeare comes next to Mr. Trollope in the number and variety of his forms of proposal, and the visible zest and enjoyment with which he throws himself into the work. There are more offers of marriage in his plays than in all the witty comedies of a later age put together. It is this turn for matchmaking which has brought down upon him the censures of George Sand, who, in adapting *Comme il vous plaira* to the French stage, felt her moral sense wounded, and found much correction necessary to fit it for her refined countrymen. She complains that Shakspeare, by a strange and seemingly incomprehensible contrast, has set the divinest grace by the side of the most frightful cynicism. "Not only did he give the *douce* Audrey to the *grivois* Touchstone, but Celia is mismatched with the detestable Oliver." Shakspeare has, indeed, a way of coming very promptly to the point, and accomplishes very quick reformations with a wedding in prospect. He will even strike off a marriage in a parenthesis. Thus the Duke to Isabel: —

Dear Isabel,
I have a notion much imports your good,
Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline,
What's mine is yours and what is yours is mine.

In fact, he never allows the lady to doubt the sincerity of her lover's intentions; all is honest and above board; there is a reassuring touch of business in his most romantic declarations. Fenton, in making love to Mistress Anne, confesses to her that her father will not believe but he woos her for her money:—

And tells me 'tis a thing impossible
I should love thee but as a property.
ANNE.—Maybe, he tells you true.

FENTON.—No, heaven so speed me in my
time to come!

Albeit I will confess thy father's wealth
Was the first motive that I woo'd thee, Anne:
Yet wooing thee, I found thee of more value
Than stamps in gold, or sums in sealed bags;
And 'tis the very riches of thyself
That now I aim at.

We can conceive no wooing less to George Sand's taste than Henry V.'s; for in her numerous expositions of the passion, constancy, which is the King's one plea, and with Shakspeare pre-eminent, figures not only as an impossible virtue, but as no virtue at all:—

I cannot gasp out my eloquence, nor I have no cunning in protestation; only downright oaths, which I never use till urged nor never break for urging. If thou canst love a fellow of this temper, Kate, whose face is not worth sunburning, that never looks in his glass for anything he sees there, let thine eye be thy cook. I speak to thee plain soldier: If thou canst love me for this, take me; if not, to say to thee—that I shall die is true; but—for thy love, by the Lord, no; yet I love thee too; and while thou livest, dear Kate, take a fellow of plain and uncoined constancy, for he perforce must do thee right, because he hath not the gift to woo in other places.

For cynicism—the real thing—what can match the scene where Richard III. proposes himself to Anne? With what wonderful plausibility does he cheat a weak vain woman out of her grief and hatred, and show us how it might be done! Nothing could be more masterly. The subject is clearly congenial. The gradations with which she is brought round from loathing and spitting to a half consent are possible as we read. Richard confesses all his murders, but they were done for love of her; and he offers his sword “to hide in this true breast”:—

ANNE.—Well, well, put up your sword.

RICHARD.—Then say my peace is made.

ANNE.—That shall you know hereafter.

RICHARD.—But shall I live in hope?

ANNE.—All men, I hope, live so.

RICHARD.—Vouchsafe to wear this ring.

ANNE.—To take is not to give.

[*She puts on the ring.*]

When Richard exclaims,

Was ever woman in this humour wooed?

Was ever woman in this humour won?

it is not only Richard that triumphs, but the imagination that has wrought it out triumphs too. Again, what a delightful relish we detect in the situation where Petruchio proposes to Kate with that nice adjustment of bullying and flattery by which the shrewish temper may be mastered, which yearns to hear pretty things and wooing words, though it cannot help shying and snapping at them:—

And will you, nill you, I will marry you?
Now, Kate, I am a husband for your turn,
For by this light whereby I see thy beauty
(Thy beauty that doth make me like thee well)
Thou must be married to no man but me,
For I am he am born to tame you, Kate.

Parents arranged marriages in Shakspeare's days with probably a higher idea of their rights than has since prevailed, but he would not have us to suppose parental prerogative to be everything and the lady's wishes nothing. Indeed all along it has been the part of the drama to relax the stern cords of parental authority, and plead the rights of the affections—with Shakspeare the legitimate rights. The three hundred pounds a year which recommend Slender to Master Page are to be no indemnification with the poet's audience for the dulness which could not plead its own cause:—

SHALLOW.—She's coming; to her, coz. O boy, thou hadst a father.

SLENDER.—I had a father, Mistress Anne; my uncle can tell you good jests of him. Pray you, uncle, tell Mistress Anne the jest how my father stole two geese out of a pen; good uncle.

SHALLOW.—Mistress Anne, my cousin loves you.

SLENDER.—Ay, that I do, as well as any woman in Gloucestershire.

SHALLOW.—He will maintain you like a gentlewoman. He will make you a hundred and fifty pound jointure.

ANNE.—Good Master Shallow, let him woo for himself.

Our space, not our store of examples, fails us, though, as we have said, it is not in the drama that the real field of illustration and suggestion lies. That must be explored at some future opportunity.

From The Saturday Review.
"OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT" AND
COUNT BISMARCK.

"Our Own Correspondent" has come to condign grief. We make no apology, which under other circumstances would have been due to Mr. W. H. Russell, for naming him, because, since he has had the honour, if it is an honour, of being personally denounced by the redoubtable Count Bismark, it can be no breach of etiquette to assume his personality in the columns of the *Times*. Mr. Russell has had a fall—indeed he has had two falls; one from his horse, and one from his place of honour at Ferrières. The material tumble was an ominous forecast of the moral purl, as horsey men call it. We shall only be doing Mr. Russell a kindness, which he will appreciate, if we devote our space, which some cynical readers may say is wasted, to the narrative of his adventure with his horse in Versailles street. It is not for us to appraise the relative importance of Mr. Russell's accident as compared with other events of the day; but as in the same copy of the *Times* about the same number of lines is devoted to the capitulation of Strasburg and to the tragic fall of Mr. Russell's broken-kneed horse, we assume that the disasters are of equal historical value. Mr. Russell then, it seems, with his peculiar alacrity to do everybody's business as well as his own, picked up some unimportant fact about an ambulance which he met in the street, and in the fervour of his zeal to purvey news hurried after the Staff to tell them what was not worth telling. His alacrity in busybodying was so great that he rode at full gallop on a paved causeway, and in turning a corner horse and man came down with what is technically called a cropper. As the horse only broke his two knees and Mr. Russell bruised one knee, few people but Mr. Russell would have diarized and published this notable incident; fewer still would have sent it to the *Times*, to be perused with wondering awe by all Europe. But out of this ignoble trifle Mr. Russell contrived to pay a sly compliment to himself, and did a bit of pictorial talk. We see the noble animal rearing, and while rearing, "in a second" the crafty horseman "throws up his arms across his forehead" and with wondrous skill wriggles from under the horse, who, after performing this playful feat on his hind legs, doubles up his fore feet and comes to earth. Perhaps never was bad riding so glorified, and Mr. Russell has the skill to wish it to be inferred that he at any rate

can throw his horse down in a paved street as a proof of noble horsemanship. Some folks may think that, though all this is very graphic, it is ineffably silly, not to say impertinent. It is something, to be sure, that we do not get in addition to this wretched nonsense half a column of gabble devoted to the pathology of Mr. Russell's swelled knee, or to an historical diary of the progress of his bruise through all the colours of the spectrum. But, as it is, we are all getting thoroughly tired of Mr. Russell and his small-beer chronicles, seven columns of rapid and unprofitable chatter, about himself and his breakfasts, and his gossip, and his familiarity with generals and staff-officers. Sterne could sentimentalize over a dead jackass, but a Russell cannot dignify a broken-kneed hack. The Crown Prince's boots and breeches are, on the whole, more interesting than Mr. Russell's pinched ribs.

Rolling on the sharp *trottoir* of Versailles, Mr. Russell however could not have forecast the more serious tumble which was in store for him. As in the mishap just chronicled, so in his more terrible downfall, Mr. Russell was pitched over by his officiousness. As usual, Mr. Russell did not regard his Latin grammar. From sad experience of "Our Own" we remember the once familiar line

Percontatorem fugito: nam garrulus idem est.

In his letter published in the *Times* of September 24, Mr. Russell took upon himself to relate "what occurred when the Emperor Napoleon and the King of Prussia met at Bellevue." Now considering that the surrender at Sedan was long past and over, and that the details, true or fictitious, of it had been published over and over again, it might have been thought that the matter was not at all in Mr. Russell's way. But Mr. Russell thought very properly that an event of such historical magnitude would be incomplete to all posterity were it not written in the book of Russell, and authenticated by the Great Chronicler himself. Future ages would say the Napoleoniad would be incomplete without its Russell. *Caret vate sacro*. This must not be; so *à propos* of nothing at all, and intercalated between the usual weary gabble about milestones and somebody's dirty shirts, Mr. Russell, not without a noble pomp of diction and a grave circumstantiality of details, tells us about the interview between Emperor and King. Gibbon, in a famous passage, informs us how and where he finished his immortal work, and after Gibbon's pattern a greater than

Gibbon solemnly authenticates the precious fragment of contemporary history. "I write from this town of Coulommiers," and henceforth Coulommiers, which up to that moment nobody in England had ever heard of, is for ever immortal. Here, admiring students of all ages will say—here the immortal Russell wrote his famous narrative. To be sure, when the tale came, it contained absolutely nothing new; or rather, as the proverbial formula has it, what was true was not new, and what was new was on the face of it untrue. Nobody but Mr. Russell could have persuaded himself that the Emperor actually did not know who commanded the Prussians at Sedan. This was the only novelty in Mr. Russell's gorgeous *historiette*. Of course it was written up to the finest finish of the most exalted penny-alining, and decorated with the very best of fustian, all about "the grand old King," and "the finest mintage of Tennyson's brain," and "the cloud by day and the pillar"—it might as well, for the sake of accuracy, have been pillar of fire—"by night," "heroic images," and suchlike stately verbiage. But new facts the history contained none. Why then was it written? "My little history. . . comes from the best sources." As to sources there could be but one; it must have come from King William himself. No other human being was present in that memorable saloon of Bellevue. The Crown Prince himself was excluded. Either then the spirits must have told the wondrous story to Mr. Russell; or he must have developed it from his own consciousness; or he must have got it from the King himself directly, or all but at first hand. This was the *raison d'être* of "my little history." Other "Our Own Correspondents" may have interviewed Bismark or Jules Favre, but I, the *Own Correspondent*, get my intelligence from nothing less than Kings or Crown Princes. "It comes from the best sources"; and the best sources are the highest sources; and the best source in this case, indeed the only authority which can be relied upon, is that of the only person who was present—namely, the King himself.

Mr. Russell, we admit, did not say that the King told him; but what he must have wished us to infer was that he got his information from the King, or from one only next to the King. And this was a feather in Mr. Russell's cap. Our *Own Correspondent* here touched the zenith. Mr. Russell was at head-quarters; he was hail fellow well met with all sorts of royalties,

and enjoyed their special confidences. All of a sudden comes out a formal telegram signed Bismark:—"The report of the conversation between King William and the Emperor Napoleon, given by Dr. Russell, the *Times* Correspondent, is founded throughout upon mere invention." Mere invention, and nothing else; either Dr. Russell's own invention, or the invention of somebody who has hoaxed Dr. Russell, the great historian. Which is as much as to say—for Count Bismark does not mince matters—the whole thing is a fiction from first to last. Such is history, contemporary history, in our last "Russell's Modern History." We suppose Count Bismark intends to say that all that has been said by anybody and everybody about the famous interview is mere invention; for, after all, Mr. Russell only says substantially what others have said before him. If this is what he means, he had better have said so; for to single out Mr. Russell for express contradiction is to attach somewhat too much importance to Mr. Russell's own particular gossip. Count Bismark may have known that King William was especially disgusted at the conclusion which people drew as to the indelicacy of his relating what passed between him and the Emperor, and was, not without reason, more seriously offended at the suspicion that either he or those about him had chattered the incident over with a newspaper Correspondent. This may account for, but will hardly justify Count Bismark's telegram. The King of Prussia might honourably wish in the eyes of Europe to be exonerated from the suspicion of having violated propriety in describing, directly or indirectly, to Mr. Russell what passed between him and the Emperor in private conference. But even for this creditable object it is not very dignified for a King, or for a King's highest servant, to fall to wrangling with Mr. Russell. Special Correspondents are, we know to our cost, literary libertines, and great statesmen may as well let them be "chartered libertines." Count Bismark will have to start a new telegraph service if he proposes to himself the duty of contradicting formally and officially all the nonsense of all "Our Owns." Yesterday he thought it worth while to repel the insinuation that he ever expressed some opinion which somebody on the *Daily Telegraph* attributed to him. The sensitiveness as to what Correspondents, especially as to what Mr. Russell said, is not very wise. Let the man scribble, because scribble he must; it is his nature to. Nobody

whose opinion is worth having attaches the least importance to what Mr. Russell does or does not say. It is a pity that Count Bismark does. As the matter stands, and as of course Mr. Russell will have his say, the Count seems to have done what the schoolboy in his verses thought impolitic, . . . parvas volucres bombardâ cedere magnâ.

What will be the end of it we cannot conjecture. Either Mr. Russell will eat humble pie, or, if he contradicts Count Bismark, Count Bismark will follow up his telegram. He can hardly tolerate at head-quarters the author or disseminator of "mere invention." And should Mr. Russell's place know him no more, and should he be forced to abandon Ferrières as he was obliged to fly America, the world will come to an end, and the *Times* will probably go in for France once more.

From The Saturday Review.
THE GERMAN VIEW OF ALSACE AND LORRAINE.

WE are not going to try to foretell what will be the issue of the present war with regard to those border provinces which Germany at this moment seems to have made up her mind to hold, and which France at least professes to have no less fully made up her mind not to give up. Neither are we going to say what, on any abstract principle, ought to be the issue, because nothing is more unlikely than that the strife should be ended by either side submitting to an abstract principle of any kind. But it is just as well that people should fully understand that side of the case which, with regard at least to the question of territorial cession, seems just now to be the less popular. Many people, even people who have on the whole taken the German side, are beginning to cry out at the German claim on the lands which, changed by French lips into Alsace and Lorraine, still keep on German lips their older names of Elsass and Lothringen. The claim is spoken of as if it were something strange and monstrous, something of which the like had never been heard before. Other people know better than this; they know that, if Germany seizes Elsass and Lothringen, or a slice of French territory much greater than Elsass and Lothringen, Germany will simply be doing what all conquering States have done since wars began among men. But they argue that Germany ought now to set a

grand example, that she ought to begin a new era in which cessions of territory shall no longer be heard of. We are told that we must not nowadays have another Vienna Congress, in which "souls" shall be handed about from master to master without any regard to the wishes of the souls themselves. We are further told that the annexation of these provinces would be no gain to Germany, but rather a loss; that, as it is not just, so neither is it profitable, to reign over unwilling subjects; that by exacting a cession of territory a wound would be inflicted on France which would rankle in the national breast till some form of vengeance has been taken; that, in short, Germany, by demanding the cession of these provinces as a condition of peace, would in fact be sowing the dragon's teeth for another war.

Now we should suppose that no thoughtful German or partizan of Germany would deny that in some of these arguments there is no lack of strength or appearance of strength. Whether we believe all the stories of conversations with Count Bismark or not, we may be sure that the last at any rate of these arguments has been and will be carefully weighed by German statesmen before the final decision is come to. That will be done which to certain very clear heads may seem to be most likely to lead to the lasting profit of Germany. Meanwhile it may be well to try to put ourselves into the position of an ordinary well-informed German, and to see how the question is likely to appear to him.

First of all, it is as well to remember that Germans do not, like ourselves, live in an island. The fact of our living in an island makes it somewhat hard for us thoroughly to understand the case of Continental nations with regard to the purely artificial barriers which often separate them. Because Great Britain is something with a real physical being, with boundaries which cannot be changed except by the act of God, we are apt,—often quite unwittingly—to look on France or Germany, or any other Continental country, as something which is equally unchangeable in the nature of things, and whose boundaries it is as unnatural to enlarge or to contract as it would be to enlarge or to contract the boundaries of Great Britain. Secondly, we should remember that Germans, as a rule, understand the past history both of their own and of other countries very much better than either Frenchmen or Englishmen do. There are a great number of points which have no small bearing

on the present case, about which an Englishman generally knows nothing at all, about which a Frenchman is positively fed upon falsehood, but which every well-educated German understands thoroughly. The Frenchman certainly believes that there is some special sanctity about his own country and nation which gives it privileges above all other countries and nations. It is in the eternal fitness of things that the French frontier should always go forward and never go back; that France should dismember other countries at pleasure, but that she should never be dismembered herself; that on every accession of power by a neighbour she must in common justice receive a compensating increase of territory, but that it is something wicked and preposterous for even a conqueror encamped on French soil to think of keeping any portion of his conquests. It seems to him perfectly right that France should, even without provocation, invade other countries and besiege their capitals, but that a foreign army should, even in strict self-defence, invade France and besiege her capital, seems to him not merely the adverse fortune of war, but something monstrous, unnatural, and sacrilegious. The Frenchman keeps on saying all this till he believes it himself, and till the Englishman half believes it also. The Englishman of himself unconsciously fancies France to be, not an arbitrary space on the map, but something as eternally traced by the hand of nature as his own island. He is fully prepared to think it something contrary to nature for the France of the map, like the Great Britain of the map, to grow smaller. And when he has been duly lectured by the Frenchman on natural boundaries, he half believes that the occupation of the west side of the Rhine by some Power other than France is something analogous to the occupation of the west side of the German Ocean by some Power other than England. Furthermore he gets a confused idea that a compact and united France is something which has existed from all eternity, while a compact and united Germany is a dream of yesterday, which perhaps first came into men's heads at Frankfurt in 1848. Altogether he gets, wittingly or unwittingly, a kind of vague impression that the annexation of French territory by Germany is a process of a much more dreadful kind than the annexation of German territory by France.

Now the German has a different tale to tell. In his eyes France is very far from

being a holy and unchangeable thing which has existed, or ought to have existed, from all eternity. It is simply that extent of territory which the Dukes, Kings, Commonwealths, and Tyrants of Paris have, in one age or another, contrived to win and keep. If he chooses to speak of France as a revolted province of Germany, he will not be speaking without authority. "A regno secessit Gallia nostra" is a very old saying indeed. If he is uncivil enough to speak of a large part of existing France as made up of the stealings of the last six hundred years, he will be saying what the historian cannot take upon himself to deny. Instead of allowing that France has any natural and eternal boundaries, he knows that the boundaries of France are of all boundaries the most fluctuating. He knows that there was a time when Strasburg and Metz, when Lyons and Marseilles, were not yet French. He knows that there was a time when Hamburg and Lübeck, when Rome and Triest, were French, so far as French occupation could make them so. He is tempted to think that, as French occupation has ceased in the one case, there may perhaps be no eternal law forbidding French occupation to cease in the other. He sees that all the acquisitions of France have been made at the expense of the Empire of which Germany was once the head, that a large portion of them has been made at the expense of the German Kingdom itself. When this war began, he saw within the French territory towns and districts which once were part of Germany, which still bear German names, and whose inhabitants still speak the German tongue. He saw one noble German city, the site of the great master-pieces of German art, held by France by virtue of an impudent robbery committed by a French King in a time of perfect peace. He saw mile after mile of the shore of the German stream turned into a French province and strengthened with fortresses directed as a menace against Germany. He knows, moreover, that other German lands, that the whole length of the German river, had been marked out as the next spoil, and that in this very war he is simply beating back those who would have seized them. He sees, in short, in France simply a constant, restless, insatiable aggressor on every German land. At last the tables are turned. Instead of the Frenchman being encamped on German soil, the German is encamped on French soil. What then are likely to be his feelings? It would not be very amazing if he gave way to feelings of pure vengeance, if he deemed

that the time was at last come when he might do by his enemy as his enemy had so often done by him. Such feelings might be unchristian, unjust, impolitic, but they would certainly not be unnatural. If the conqueror were to dismember the conquered land according to no law but his own pleasure, he would be simply doing after the manner of conquerors. To declare Rouen and Bordeaux to be incorporated with Germany would not be more violent, more contrary to nature, than it was to declare Hamburg and Lübeck to be incorporated with France. It is worth bearing in mind that the furthest extremity of vengeance on conquered France would be simple retaliation, would be simply what conquerors have done over and over again upon incomparably slighter provocation. It might be easy to argue that in dealing with a State which has spent a life of aggression for the last six hundred years, the only way to hinder future aggressions is to crush it once and forever. Is there anything wonderful or blamable if German statesmen demand such a cession of fortresses, such a rectification of frontier, as may defend Germany at least for a while from the attacks of her restless neighbour? Is anything wonderful or blamable if German popular feeling goes a step further, and, taking a more purely historical and sentimental view, demands that a Power whose eyes are so ceaselessly set upon German lands shall be made to give up every inch of German land which it has still within its grasp?

And here it will be as well to notice how strictly the views of liberal and well-informed Germans, as distinguished from the possible views of either statesmen or soldiers, confine themselves to the districts which are still German in speech. The *Kölnische Zeitung*, for instance, takes infinite pains to make its leaders distinguish between *Deutschlothringen* and *Wälschlothringen*, between that part — much the smaller part — of the Duchy which still keeps to its German speech, and that part which has become thoroughly French in speech as well as in allegiance. *Elsass* and *Deutschlothringen* must be kept; but the notion of keeping *Wälschlothringen* is cast aside with a sort of horror. Statesmen and soldiers may settle as they will about the fortress of Metz; but Germany, as Germany, simply claims so much territory as still remains German, and not an inch beyond. Strasburg is won, and he must be a sanguine Frenchman indeed who hopes to get it back again. And with

Strasburg the more enlightened feeling in Germany demands all that, like Strasburg, is still German, and rejects anything that is not. That a large body of German opinion carefully insists on this distinction at least shows that the conclusion which it supports, whether sound or unsound in itself, is a conclusion based on argument and reflection, and is not the mere instinct of insatiable conquerors.

The obvious answers which a neutral may be expected to make to any form of the claim have been already hinted at. They chiefly amount to this. The people of the districts proposed to be annexed do not desire annexation. Even where they are German in speech and origin, they have long become French in feeling, and altogether abhor the notion of separation from France. Their annexation would therefore be in itself unjust. And it would also be impolitic. No strength can be gained by the acquisition of unwilling subjects, and France would be so embittered by the dismemberment that she would never cease from efforts to regain the lost provinces, and a succession of wars would be the probable result.

To arguments of this kind the German would probably answer that the rights of the people to choose their own government, and not to be transferred from one government to another against their will, though a good general rule, cannot be held, and is not held, to apply in all cases. He might possibly ask whether all of those who use this argument against him would be willing to trust the connexion between Great Britain and Ireland to a universal ballot of Irishmen. He might go on to ask whether some of his opponents did not deny the right of the Confederate States of America to choose their government for themselves. If the safety of Germany — he would perhaps add of Europe — calls for the cession of the whole or any part of *Elsass* or *Lothringen*, he would argue that the wishes of the inhabitants cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the safety of Germany. These arguments, these retorts, may be sound or may be unsound; but they are so obvious that they are sure to be made. The German might go on to argue that the unwillingness of the people of these provinces would not be very long-lived; that, if they turned easily from Germans into Frenchmen, they would still more easily be turned back from Frenchmen into Germans, and that the next generation would be good Germans born. He might also perhaps argue that the times are now very different from the

times when France annexed them. It might well be that the district which in the seventeenth century was transferred from the rule of some petty German prince to that of the great French monarchy may very well have immediately gained by the change, but that for the same district to be transferred back again, not to the rule of any petty German prince, but to form part of the great German nation, with its mighty future before it, was a gain yet more incontestable. As to the alleged bitterness which the dismemberment would leave behind in France, he would answer that France, as it is, will be so embittered by mere want of success, by the crushing of her schemes of aggrandizement and by the invasion of her territory, that the increase of bitterness caused by

the dismemberment would not be perceptible. Moreover one alleged object of the dismemberment is, by giving Germany a stronger frontier to do something to secure her against the effects of the bitterness which the present war cannot fail to leave behind it in any case. Such arguments as these may not convince neutrals, they certainly will not convince Frenchmen; but it is as well to bear in mind that Germany has arguments on her side, arguments alike historical, sentimental, and politic. And it implies no approval of annexation to bear in mind, what is beginning to be forgotten, that the most that Germany threatens to do in her war of defence has at any rate more to be said for it than the least of what France threatened to do in her war of aggression.

MANY thousands of workers will rise this morning to pursue their work; many thousands of critics (their natural enemies as the workers would say) will rise to pursue their work.

Without undervaluing criticism, we may admit that a great deal of needless pain is caused by it; and that, as a general rule, we all sympathize more with the doers than the critics.

The object of this short essay is to aid the criticized in bearing criticism.

The first thing is not to pretend not to care for hostile criticism. That form of insincerity never helped any man.

One of the best comforts in the case of hostile criticism is to remember the proverb, "Many men, many minds." Any man who has done anything which provokes much comment, will tell you that it is astonishing how diverse are the opinions of persons whom you would admit to be equally qualified for criticizing. That which pleases one, disgusts another; and *vice versa*. This diversity of opinion in mankind might alone suffice to comfort those who furnish matter for the criticism in the world.

But, unfortunately, the worst part of criticism is misrepresentation. No man can pretend to be quite indifferent to that. You, the person criticized, are made out to have said this, thought that, done the other thing; and, in reality, you did not say this, think that, or do the other thing. This is undoubtedly a great grievance.

But look at the whole matter as a question of forces. So much force is lost by this misrepresentation; but do not take the matter to heart, as if misrepresentation were a circumstance that belonged to you alone. It besets all human effort.

Look at the whole matter as a merchant would at any separate venture of his, of which he cal-

culates the gain or loss by double entry. There were such and such prosperous winds in favour of the good ship *Mary-Anne*, and there were such and such adverse winds against the good ship. She came into a port where there were no British goods, or she came into a port which was overstocked with them. In a word, separate the venture from yourself, and consider it a distinct transaction.

Vain and retrospective persons suffer most from hostile criticism. Go on working. What you *have* done — what *has* been said about it — soon moves into the region of the past, and it moves much more quickly for you, when you give your mind to attempting something new.

As a general rule, never reply to hostile criticism; do not waste your fire by returning the shot aimed at you from behind a stone-wall. This, of course, applies only to anonymous criticism, which is now the principal public criticism in the world.

We must beware, however, of confining our views of criticism to that branch of it which deals with politics, literature, or art. Domestic criticism is perhaps the most common form of criticism, and not the least difficult to bear. But the general rules given above are not inapplicable in this case. And this additional rule may be given — namely, that the person criticized, who is most probably the active and decisive person, should reflect that there is little else left for the other persons but to criticize; and he or she would not like their minds to be inert. It is only slaves who do not venture to criticize. Every ruler, whether of a family or of a kingdom, must admit that his actions and his decisions would hardly be of interest to himself if they would not endure, and ultimately triumph over, the criticisms of those whom he governs.

Arthur Helps.